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LADY HAMILTON

AND

LORD NELSON.

VOL. I.

LADY HAMILTON

AND

LORD NELSON

AN HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY BASED ON LETTERS
AND OTHER DOCUMENTS IN THE POSSESSION
OF ALFRED MORRISON, ESQ. OF
FONTHILL, WILTSHIRE.

BY

JOHN CORDY JEAFFRESON

AUTHOR OF "THE REAL LORD BYRON," ETC.

IN TWO VOLS.—VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

IN writing this memoir of a remarkable woman, I aimed at producing a book, that, whilst affording entertainment to readers who read chiefly for amusement, should be serviceable to historical students, in enabling them to apprehend the nature of Lady Hamilton's relation to the Queen of the Sicilies, and to form a just estimate of her 'services to England.' The execution of this design required that I should deal precisely with certain passages of Nelson's career. The readiest way of proving her innocent of causing him to commit heinous offences in the Mediterranean, was to prove him guiltless of the crimes which Southey and Alison accuse him of perpetrating at her instigation. But in the ensuing pages I say nothing or little of Nelson, that does not contribute to the development and illustration of her character and story.

Together with the certificate of Amy Lyon's bap-

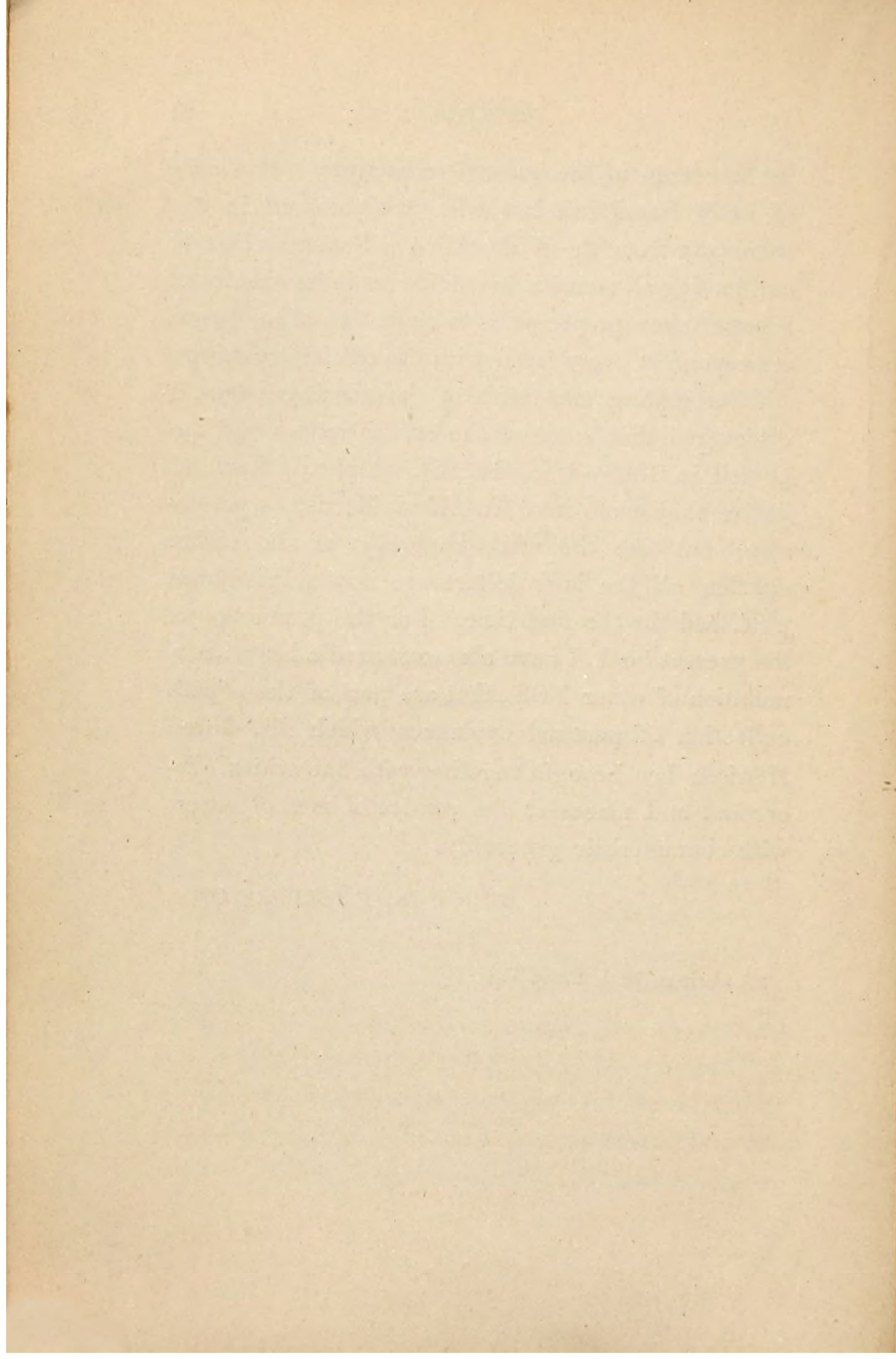
tism at Great Neston in Cheshire, and the Last Will of Emma Lady Hamilton, neither of which documents has hitherto been printed, these volumes contain a series of letters by Amy Lyon *alias* Emily Lyon *alias* Emma Lyon *alias* Emma Hart, best known as Emma Lady Hamilton; the more or less notable persons, addressed in the long letters or brief notes, being the Honourable Charles Francis Greville, Sir William Hamilton, Romney the famous Painter, 'Vathek' Beckford of Fonthill, Wilts, Miss Cornelia Knight, and the Honourable Robert Fulke Greville. Opening with a letter written at Hawarden, co. Flint, to the Honourable Charles Greville in January 1782, and closing with a letter written in the neighbourhood of Calais on September 21, 1814, within four months of the writer's death, to her nephew the Honourable Robert Fulke Greville, the series of epistles comprises writings, dated from Parkgate, co. Chester, Edgware Road near Paddington Green, Naples, Caserta, Castellamare, the *Foudroyant* in Naples Bay, Richmond, co. Surrey, and 12, Temple Place, within the Rules of the King's Bench Prison. The copies of the baptismal certificate and the letters, herein submitted to readers, were made by my own hand from the original documents, after they had passed by public and duly authorized sale to the Morrison MSS. Pledging my credit as a record-expert for the authenticity of the letters, I am responsible for

the accuracy of the printed transcripts. The copy of Lady Hamilton's last will was obtained in the usual way from the Wills Office at Somerset House; and having all reasonable confidence in its exactness, I have taken proper pains to make two of my pages correspond in every letter with the official transcript.

After writing two-thirds of the ensuing pages, I discovered that some of the earlier letters had appeared in 1883—4 in the 'St. Stephen's Review,' before they came into Mr. Alfred Morrison's possession; but like the more important of the earlier epistles, *all* the later letters are now printed and published for the first time. For the production of the present book, I have also examined a large accumulation of other MSS., that are part of the superb collection of personal evidences, which Mr. Alfred Morrison has brought together with fine critical discretion, and places at the service of men of letters with characteristic generosity.

JOHN CORDY JEAFFRESON.

24, Carlton Road, Maida Vale, W.



CONTENTS OF VOL. I.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD 1

Record of Lady Hamilton's Death at Calais—Uncertainty respecting the Date of her Birth—Her Baptism at Great Neston, in Cheshire—Certificate of the Baptism—She is named Amy, after her Aunt Amy Moore, of Liverpool—Public Announcements of her Marriage, on the 6th of September, 1791, to Sir William Hamilton, K.C.B.—Registration of the Marriage at Marylebone Church—She Signs it with the Name of Amy—Her Removal from Cheshire to Flintshire—Her Childhood at Hawarden—Her Affection for her Mother and for her Grandmother Kidd—The Girl's Education and Characteristics—Her several Good Qualities—She Enters the Service of Mr. Thomas, of Hawarden, as a Nurse-girl—She Leaves Hawarden and Goes to London.

1763—1778 A.D.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST YEARS IN LONDON 19

Amy Lyon's Arrival in London—Chatham Place, Blackfriars—The Girl's Phenomenal Beauty—She Becomes the Servant of a Tradesman in St. James's Market—She is Lady-Companion to a Lady of Fashion—Her Exertions for a Friend in Trouble—Her First Great Error—Who was the Villain?—Captain John Willet Payne, R.N.—Sir Henry Fetherstonehaugh, Baronet—'Up Park,' co. Sussex—Emily's 'Giddiness' and 'Wildness'—More Trouble for the Young Adventuress.

1778—1781 A.D.

CHAPTER III.

A MATTER OF CONTROVERSY 28

Graham the Quack—His 'Temple of Health'—His Lectures—The 'Goddess of Health'—The *Blackwood* Essayist—His Argument—How It Falls to the Ground—The Scandalous 'Memoirs of Lady Hamilton'—Pettigrew's Sources of Information—Mrs. Richard Trench on Lady Hamilton's Feet—Lady Hamilton's Accomplishments—Her 'Attitudes'—Examples of 'the Attitudes' published by Sir William Hamilton—State of the Case—Concluding Suggestion.

1781 A.D.

CHAPTER IV.

FROM FLINTSHIRE TO PADDINGTON GREEN 41

A dismal Christmas—A sadder New Year—Amy's Re-appearance at Hawarden—Cold Looks—Hard Words—Busy Gossip-mongers—Information from the Post Office—Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's Silence—Amy in Despair—Her Letter to the Hon. Charles Greville—Editorial Manipulation of her Letters—Style of her Epistles—Mr. Greville's Answer to her Letter—Emily returns to London—Her bad Life in 1781—Her pathetic Confession to Romney—Mr. Greville calls upon Her—His Counsel and Proposal—Emily accepts his Terms—Mr. Greville's Position and Expectations—Paddington Green—Emily's 'New Home'—The House at the Green's north-east Corner—Unavailing Regrets.

1781—1782 A.D.

CHAPTER V.

EMMA'S HOME WITH MR. GREVILLE 61

The Hon. Charles Greville's Lineage—His Uncle, Sir William Hamilton—Intercourse of the Uncle and Nephew—Emma's Life at Paddington Green—Her Personal and Domestic Expenses—Her Mother—Strong Testimony to Mrs. Cadogan's Merit—Emma's Children—Her Intercourse with Romney—Scandalous Inventions—Miserable Slanders—Allan Cunningham's Statement to Lady Hamilton's Discredit—Duration of Emma's Association with Mr. Greville—His Way of Educating Her—How He Governed Her—Her Progress under the Discipline—Mr. Greville's Testimony to her Goodness—Vehemence of her Admiration and Love of Him—Ranelagh Gardens—Emma Sings in Public—Mr. Greville's Displeasure—Emma's Contrition—Did He Love Her?

1782—1786 A.D.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PHILOSOPHERS OF THE GREEN 88

Sir William Hamilton re-visits England—His Character, Achievements, and Distinctions—The Ape and the Antiquary—Sir William hopping about a Drawing-room on his Back-bone—His early *Mariage de Convenance*—Rumours of a second Marriage—Mr. Charles Greville's Alarm—Sir William and 'the fair Tea-maker'—'Finer than Anything in Antique Art'—Pliny the Elder—Pliny the Younger—Pettigrew's charitable Suggestion—The Beginning of the Game—The younger Pliny's pecuniary Embarrassments—His Confidence in Emma—Friends in Council—The Elder Pliny speaks to Emma confidentially—She starts for Cheshire.

1784 A.D.

CHAPTER VII.

'OUT OF TOWN' 104

Emma revisits Cheshire—She takes her Child from Hawarden—Arrangement for the Child's Education—Emma's Letters from Parkgate to Mr. Greville—Her bountiful Gift to her Grandmother Kidd—Her Intercourse with her Child—Bathing and Sea-Air—Emma's Idolatry of the good Mr. Greville—His Silence and apparent Neglect of Her—The Postman *never* brings her a Letter—At length she hears from Mr Greville—She returns to Town—Her Illness at Paddington—Her good Resolutions—Sir William Hamilton's Increasing Kindness to Her—A dazzling Destiny—The Invitation to Naples—Sir William Hamilton's Return to Italy.

1784 A.D.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM LONDON TO NAPLES 123

The Blot on Nelson's Fame—Another erroneous Story—Negociations between Mr. Greville and Sir William Hamilton—Particulars of Sir William's Action for his Nephew's Advantage—The Bond—The Letter of Promise—Mr. Greville's *previous* Request to be relieved of Emma—His Overtures for Marriage with the Honourable Henrietta Middleton—Her Marriage to another Suitor—Mr. Greville's various Motives—The secret Arrangement for the Transference of Emma—Her Loyalty to Mr. Greville—The Way in which the Arrangement was Carried

out—Mr. Greville's Conduct—Its extenuating Circumstances—
The Project for an immediate Settlement on Her—Mr. Gavin
Hamilton—Emma at Naples.

1784—1786 A.D.

CHAPTER IX.

SENSATION IN NAPLES 144

Emma's Appearance in 1786—Period of her Beauty's Perfection—Length of her auburn Tresses—Her Reception at Naples—Sir William's Presents to Emma—Her Carriage and Servants—Her Boat and liveried Boatmen—She begs Sir William to send Money to Mr. Greville—She pines for her Benefactor in London—She is sensible of Sir William's Passion—Her Frankness to Mr. Greville—Her Pathetic Letters to Him—Her first Alarm—She implores Mr. Greville to keep his Promise—His Silence to her Fourteen Letters—Progress of her Education—Sensation caused by her Beauty at Naples—Princes and Nobles in her Train—The King's Gallantry to Her—Steadiness of her Affection for Mr. Greville—At gay Naples she pines for foggy London—What She has been told to do—Her fifteenth Letter to Mr. Greville.

1786 A.D.

CHAPTER X.

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON'S VICTORY 163

Emma's Fifteenth Letter to Mr. Greville—Letters Crossing on the Way—Emma's Delight and Rage at Mr. Greville's Letter—What Emma Lacked—Her Last Appeal to Mr. Greville's Pity and Love—She Envies a Wafer—Her Fury at Mr. Greville's Counsel—Threats and Menaces—Present of a Blue Hat and Gloves—Emma Threatens to Marry Sir William—Mr. Greville's Sense of Shame and Humiliation—Honour and Meanness—Various Courses open to Emma—The Course She Takes—Her Affection for Sir William Hamilton—Extenuating Circumstances—Question of a Date.

1786 A.D.

CHAPTER XI.

A COLD JANUARY AT NAPLES 175

Mistress *not* Wife—Whispers of a secret Marriage—Who believes the Whispers?—Sir William Hamilton at Persano—Emma's daily Letters to Him—Running to and fro of Couriers—How Emma

passes the Time—Her Dinner at the Harts'—Her Picture at Caletalino's—Her *comfortable* Dinners—Her Visits to the Convent of S. Romita—She dines with sixty Nuns—The lovely Nun, Beatrice Acquaviva—'She Flattered me up, but I was Pleased'—Emma's Enthusiasm for the Religious Ladies—More Flatterers—Emma's 'Majesty and Juno Look'—Murmurs in the Coteries—Prudence and Virtue—Maria Caroline and her Ladies.

1787 A.D.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM FRIENDSHIP TO LOVE 190

Emma's Trip to Sorrento—Diversions and Triumphs of the Trip—Song after Song—A Priest in Love with Emma—Her Pride in her own Doings—Her Nine Days in Ischia—The Ischian Peasants kneel and pray to Her—She ascends Mount Vesuvius—The Prince Royal on the Mountain—'Prince, who was your Tutor?'—On the House-Top at Caserta—Teresa and her Mistress—Dutch Gallantry—Salvo upon Salvo—Vessels of War salute Emma with all their Guns—'Quick, to San Carlo'—Emma's Four Months' Letter to Mr. Greville—Her Shawls and Attitudes—She originates 'the Shawl Dance'—Emma at Caserta—An Hour's Absence makes the Heart grow Fonder.

1787 A.D.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOCIAL RECOGNITION 211

Emma in the Saddle—Mistress of her Steed—Emma's charming Naturalness—Her Admiration of Others—Diplomatic Management—Mrs. Dickenson Gets 'a Choaking'—Emma's Loyalty to Mr. Greville—Her Trip to the Heel of Italy—'The Fair Gunning'—The Waning Beauty and the Rising Beauty—Honour to the Duchess!—Lord and Lady Elcho—Mr. and Mrs. Legge—The Duchess of Argyll's Death—Madame Le Brun—Her Ingratitude to Sir William Hamilton—'My First Diamonds'—A Reward of Merit?—The King and Queen declare Emma an Example of Feminine Virtue—Emma's Concert and Ball—She is Accepted by Society—Her Determination to become Lady Hamilton—Mr. Legge's Alarm for his Friend's 'Expectations'—He makes Enquiries about Emma—What he Hears to her Advantage and Disadvantage—Balance of Good and Evil.

1787—1791 A.D.

CHAPTER XIV.

EMMA IN ENGLAND AGAIN 239

Romney in Gloom—Romney in Elation—Emma's Reappearance in Cavendish Square—'She Prides herself on having been Mr. Romney's Model'—Sudden Relapse into Melancholy—The Appeal to Hayley—The Poet's Prescription—Emma's Return to Town—Sunshine again in Cavendish Square—Mr. Beckford of Fonthill—'Vathek' entertains Emma—Her Second Visit to Fonthill—Mr. Beckford's Scheme for making himself a Peer—The King's Consent—Was he Asked for It?—Romney's great Party—Emma's Wedding at Marylebone Church—Queen Charlotte refuses to receive Lady Hamilton—Lady Hamilton in Paris—Maria Antoinette's Benignity—Misconception touching its Consequences—Lady Hamilton at the Royal Palace of Caserta—Lady Malmesbury's nice Distinction—Lady Hamilton's Letter to Romney—Her Gratitude for her Elevation.

1791 A.D.

CHAPTER XV.

THE QUEEN'S FAVOUR AND FAVOURITE 257

Maria Caroline of Naples—Marie Antoinette of France—Characteristics of the Queen of Naples—Her Beauty and Mental Endowments—Her strong Will and Thirst for Power—Her Authority and Unscrupulousness—Peculiarities of her Regnal Position—Ferdinand's Weakness—The Queen's Motives for favouring Lady Hamilton—Badness of the Neapolitan Government—Its Redeeming Trait—The Queen's Prescience and Sagacity—Lady Hamilton's real Relation to the Queen—How the Queen makes use of the British Minister's Wife—Historical Misconceptions—Nelson's famous Codicil to his Will—His Estimate of Lady Hamilton's 'Services' to her Country—True View of those 'Services'—Its Consequences to her Reputation—Fact more favourable than Fiction to Lady Hamilton.

1791 A.D.

CHAPTER XVI.

HIGHER YET AND HIGHER 274

Lady Hamilton in her Perfection—Her Delight in 'good Cheer'—Her Care for her first-born Child—Arrangements for the Girl's Future—She passes from View—Sir William Hamilton's dangerous Illness—Sympathy of 'the Court' and 'Society'—Lady

Hamilton's Thoughtfulness for her Grandmother Kidd—Maria Caroline's Letter to Lady Hamilton—The Dauphin's Portrait—Life at Caserta and Naples—Lady Hamilton's Prudence in Prosperity—Her Troops of Friends—Her Demeanour to the Diplomatic Ladies—She sings in Duets with King Ferdinand—Captain Nelson at Naples—His Introduction to Lady Hamilton—'The Saviours of Italy'—Nelson at the Neapolitan Court—'The young Woman of Amiable Manners'—Her Kindness to Josiah Nisbet—Sir William Hamilton's second Illness—Failure of his Constitution—His Premature Old Age.

1792—1793 A.D.

CHAPTER XVII.

SECRET INTELLIGENCE 296

Sir William Hamilton's Illness in 1794—The Hamiltons at Castellamare—Third Anniversary of their Wedding—Mr. Charles Greville is made Vice-Chamberlain—Lady Hamilton's Affection for her Mother—Her Enthusiasm for Maria Caroline—The Queen's Goodness to her Favourite—Lady Hamilton's Concern for 'little Emma'—Sir William Hamilton's Illness in 1795—Lady Hamilton 'gets into Politics'—The Letter in Cypher from Spain—Maria Caroline's Promptitude in sending it to the British Minister—Her Motives for doing so—Considerations touching this significant Business—Sir James Douglas's Death—Mr. Macaulay seeks the vacant Consulship—Sir William Hamilton's Absence from Court—Maria Caroline's secret Correspondence with the British Minister—The Veil that hides it.

1794—1795 A.D.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A TITLE TO GRATITUDE 309

Lady Hamilton's Service touching the Spanish King's Letter—Nelson's Estimate of this Service—Words of the Codicil—Pettigrew's Account of the Service—Question of a Date—Were there Two Letters from Spain, or only One?—The Spanish-French Treaty—Embargo on Spanish Shipping in English Ports—Nelson's Capture of the *Santa Sabina*—Examination of Pettigrew's Statement—Absurdities of the Statement—Lady Hamilton's Private Purse—Extraordinary Payment out of it—Lady Hamilton's Letter to Mr. Charles Greville—Her View of her patriotic Services—Her Position at the Court of Naples.

1796 A.D.

CHAPTER XIX.

NELSON AND THE NILE 319

The Patroness of the British Navy—Her Abhorrence of the French—She chooses her Hero—Nelson's Services—His eight Months' Stay in England—He returns to the Mediterranean—He is appointed to the Command of a Squadron—His Orders and Instructions—Maria Caroline's Position—The French Party in Naples—Lady Hamilton's Appeal to Earl St. Vincent—The Earl's answer—The French Expedition from Toulon—It sails for Malta and Egypt—Nelson in Pursuit—His First Run to Egypt—He returns to Sicilian Waters—Troubridge at Naples—Dr. Pettigrew's strange Story—A Medley of Misconceptions—Lady Hamilton's Service to Nelson—The Service stript of romantic Exaggerations—Maria Caroline's Warrant to the Governor of Syracuse—Nelson's Gratitude—Water and Victuals for his Ships—He returns to Egypt.

1797—1798 A.D.

LADY HAMILTON

AND

LORD NELSON.

CHAPTER I.

CHILDHOOD.

Record of Lady Hamilton's Death at Calais—Uncertainty respecting the Date of her Birth—Her Baptism at Great Neston, in Cheshire—Certificate of the Baptism—She is named Amy, after her Aunt Amy Moore, of Liverpool—Public Announcements of her Marriage, on the 6th of September, 1791, to Sir William Hamilton, K.C.B.—Registration of the Marriage at Marylebone Church—She Signs it with the Name of Amy—Her Removal from Cheshire to Flintshire—Her Childhood at Hawarden—Her Affection for her Mother and for her Grandmother Kidd—The Girl's Education and Characteristics—Her several Good Qualities—She Enters the Service of Mr. Thomas, of Hawarden, as a Nurse-Girl—She Leaves Hawarden and Goes to London.

1763—1778 A.D.

THE archives of the Municipality of Calais preserve the following record,—‘A.D. 1815. Janvier, 15.—Dame Emma Lyons, agée de 51 ans, née à Lancashire, en Angleterre; domiciliée à Calais, fille de Henry Lyons, et de Marie Kidd; Veuve de William Hamilton, est décédé le 15 Janvier, 1815, à une heure après midi au domicile du Sieur Damy, Rue Française.’ It is the official record of the death of Lady Hamilton, remembered in popular story as ‘Nelson's Lady

Hamilton,' who was buried in a public cemetery just outside the town of Calais, on the 21st day of the month in which she died. The record, that giving the lady's maiden name gives also the maiden name of her mother, was obviously made under the direction of a person having some knowledge of her earlier domestic story; and there are grounds for thinking that the person from whom the official scribe obtained these particulars was Mr. Cadogan,* who hastened from England to Calais on hearing that Emma Lady Hamilton had breathed her last breath.

The record, having such impressive indications of having been drawn on sufficient evidence, has naturally been accepted by biographers as reliable testimony. Hitherto no writer has doubted the accuracy of the registration, in respect to the county of Emma Hamilton's birth. Having learnt from some of his several friends, who knew something of her in her girlhood, that she was born at Preston, or in a parish having some such name, or, it may be, relying on an erroneous statement of the letters patent of the arms granted to her in 1806, Thomas

* Taking charge of Horatia (Nelson's daughter by Lady Hamilton), this Mr. Cadogan carried the child from Calais to England, and placed her in the hands of her aunt, Mrs. Matcham (one of Nelson's sisters). That Mr. Cadogan rendered the child this service, and had in former time supplied Lady Hamilton with money, came to Dr. Pettigrew's knowledge from the lips of *his friend*, Mr. Rothery, who (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Memoirs of Lord Nelson,' vol. ii, p. 636) was by some domestic tie related to Mr. Cadogan. 'My friend Mr. Rothery,' says Pettigrew, 'tells me that his relative, Mr. Cadogan, to whom Horatia was entrusted, and by whom she was taken, after the decease of Lady Hamilton, to Mrs. Matcham, made payments on this occasion, and also afforded much assistance to Lady Hamilton, prior to her decease.'

Joseph Pettigrew declared authoritatively that the lovely and famous woman was 'the daughter of Henry Lyon, or Lyons, a man living in a menial capacity at Preston, in the county of Lancashire.' Differing materially on other points, the writers of all the noteworthy memoirs of the celebrated beauty assign her birth to that town and county. In his memoir of 'Horatio Nelson and Lady Hamilton' (*vide* 'In and About Drury Lane,' *Bentley*) the always-enterprising Dr. Doran styles her the last of the Lancashire witches. Yet it is certain that she was born neither in Preston nor in any other part of Lancashire. In ascribing her birth to the well-known Lancashire town, Pettigrew was unjust to a comparatively obscure Cheshire parish.

Six miles long by eight miles broad, Great Neston, in the Hundred of Wirrall, county Cheshire, lies on the promontory between the mouth of the river Mersey and the mouth of the river Dee, and contains no less than eight townships, one of which townships is named Nesse. To this township of Nesse belongs the honour of giving birth to the woman who, whatever may be urged to her discredit, must be admitted to have been one of the brightest beauties of her period, and incomparably the most famous woman, of her particular species of womankind, to be commemorated amongst the social celebrities of George the Third's reign.

In the last month of 1781, wishing to ascertain as nearly as possible the age of the girl whom he was thinking of taking under his protection, the Hon. Charles Greville, M.P., wrote to the young person,

who, ten years later, became his aunt, and requested her to get a certificate of her baptism from the clergyman of the church where she was baptised in her early infancy, and to send it to him in an envelope, which he had with his own hands addressed ‘To The Hon^{ble}. Mr. Greville, Portman Square, London.’ In obedience to this direction, the young person—at that time staying with her mother’s people at or near Hawarden, in Flintshire—took boat, crossed the mouth of the Dee, landed on the afore-mentioned promontory of Cheshire, and, walking to the town of Great Neston, obtained from the Rev. R. Carter, curate of the parish, this certificate of her admission to the church militant here on earth: ‘Amy, Daughter of Henry Lyon of Nesse, by Mary his wife. Bap. the 12th of May, 1765.—The above is truly copied from the G. Neston Register by—R. Carter, Curate.’ Penned by the curate, and dated by him, ‘Neston, Dec^r. 19th, 1781,’ this certificate, in its present state, exhibits two amendments, that may have been the young person’s work, or may have been made by Mr. Charles Greville’s pen. ‘Cheshire’ is written under the ‘Neston’ of the date, and ‘ly’ is added (just above the line) to ‘Amy,’ so as to show how the young person, who was christened Amy, came to be styled Amyly, and then Emily, in her girlhood.

Some nine years and nine months after the date of this certificate, when the still young person, on the 6th of September, 1791, was married at Marylebone Church to Sir William Hamilton, K.C.B., she signed the registration of her marriage with the name of Amy Lyons. This marriage was announced in the *Gentle-*

man's Magazine in these words: 'Sir W. Hamilton, K.C.B., Envoy Extraordinary, and Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Naples, to Miss Harte, a lady much celebrated for her elegant accomplishments and great musical abilities;' and in a note to an admirably able, though on several points erroneous, essay, the writer of the article on Lady Hamilton (*vide* Blackwood's 'Magazine' of April, 1860) remarks, 'It is somewhat singular that, though the name of Harte is used in the *Annual Register*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and the newspapers of the day, the name in the register, and by which Lady Hamilton signed that document, is "Amy Lyons," the surname having been originally written "Lions," and the "i" subsequently altered into a "y." The Christian name "Amy" is distinctly written. We are not aware of any other instance,' the essayist adds, 'in which she used any Christian name but that of Emma.'

The explanation of the singularity, to which the able essayist thus called attention, is that Lady Hamilton knew she was christened Amy at Great Neston in Cheshire, and knowing it to be her rightful baptismal designation was careful to use no other in signing the registration of her marriage. That there might be no question in subsequent time respecting the identity of Sir William Hamilton's second wife with the daughter of Henry Lyon of Nesse, she no doubt caused the registration to be subsequently amended by the substitution of the 'y' for the 'i.' It is curious that the Blackwood essayist, who knew so much, should at the same time have known so little about Lady Hamilton, as to be unaware that, during some

time previous to her domestication with the Hon. Charles Greville, it was her practice to sign herself 'Emly,' 'Emily,' and 'Emyly.'

One word more about the certificate of Amy Lyon's baptism. Before sending the document to Mr. Charles Greville at Portman Square, London, she wrote on the inner side of the directed envelope,—'My age was got out of the Reggester, and I have sent it to my Dear Charles. Once more adue, once more adue. O you dear Grevil!'

Henry Lyon's daughter was named 'Amy' at her baptism in Neston church, after her aunt Amy Moore (wife of John Moore of Liverpool), whose daughters were living in Moore Street, Liverpool, in September, 1811.

It is not surprising that a person, sufficiently familiar with Lady Hamilton's domestic story to know her mother's maiden name was Kidd, misdescribed her as a native of Lancashire to a Calais notary. For the peasants of the Cheshire promontory are apt to regard themselves as belonging to either of the counties, from which they are separated by a moderate expanse of water, rather than to the shire, from whose interior parts they are separated by long miles of land. In pre-railway times it was easier for them to visit their friends living just the other side of the Dee or the Mersey, than to visit their friends in Chester. Birkenhead, now-a-days through its ferry a part of Liverpool, stands on the north-west point of the peninsula, whose peasants on migrating to London are still sometimes heard to speak of themselves as hailing from the great Lancashire port. The Calais

record's evidence respecting the date of Lady Hamilton's *birth* is not to be regarded lightly, because the document is something less than precisely accurate as to the county in which she was born.

There is no reason to doubt that the lady was born on some 26th of April. Keeping her birthday on the 26th of April, she in several of her letters speaks of herself as having been born on that day. Her mother and divers of her earlier friends, Mr. Charles Greville and her husband, concur in assuring us that she was a child of the 26th of April. The uncertainty, which Pettigrew represents as covering 'the precise date of her birth,' is therefore to be regarded as an uncertainty respecting the particular year of the event. Though in 1781 she spoke of the certificate as a certificate of her age, it is needless to say that, for all the document tells, Amy Hamilton may have been ten years old at the time of her baptism. Though Pettigrew assigns her birth to 1764, I am disposed to think she was born on the 26th of April, 1763, and to concur on this matter with the person who instructed the Calais notary.

If she was fifty-one years old on the 15th of January, 1815, the woman, who drew her first breath on some 26th of April, must have completed her fifty-first year on 26th of April, 1814, and have begun her first year on the 26th of April, 1763. By this computation she was two years and sixteen days old at the time of her baptism. The additional year thus given to the Emma Hamilton of Pettigrew's memoir is in several ways a year of grace to the biographer, who would fain give an intelligible and credible

account of the lady's earlier years. Without it, she must be exhibited as a perplexingly precocious child. Without it, the biographer does not see how to put into natural sequence all the known matters of her earlier time. But with it there is no difficulty in showing how she filled so many different situations, endured so many searching trials, and gave birth to at least two children, before she sat for the first time to Romney the Painter in 1782.

The precise day, on which the Hon. Charles Greville brought Emma Hart (as Amy Lyon then styled herself) to the famous painter's house in Cavendish Square, is unknown; but from the Rev. John Romney's 'Life' of his celebrated father it is known to have been an early day of 1782. From documentary evidence, that will be given in ensuing pages of this work, it is certain that on making George Romney's acquaintance the beautiful girl was mother of a child (who can scarcely have been less than two and was possibly rising close on three years of age), and had recently either given birth to a second child or had at the last moment endured the pains and disappointment of a *fausse couche*. If she paid her first visit to Cavendish Square soon after the 26th of April, 1782 (and the day of the visit cannot have been much later), this mother of a two or three years old child, according to the statement of her age to the Calais notary, was only just nineteen years old, when she and Romney first exchanged words of courtesy. According to Pettigrew's date of her birth, this mother of the two or three years old infant (then at nurse with her grandmother Kidd at Hawarden) was only just

eighteen years of age. There is, also, good evidence that, before giving birth to this child, she had been nursemaid to Mr. Thomas of Hawarden, and nursemaid in the family of Dr. Budd, physician of Chatham Street, Blackfriars, London, and some sort of evidence that, in the interval between her withdrawal from Dr. Budd's service and the birth of her first child, she worked for a time as servant of a tradesman in St. James's Market, and then as companion to a lady of fashion. Enough surely has been said to show that biography has need of the additional year denied to Lady Hamilton by the occasionally inaccurate Pettigrew, but given to her by the instructor of the Calais notary. It would not surprise the present writer to come upon evidence that Lady Hamilton was born a year or even two years earlier than he suggests; but under the circumstances he does not feel himself justified in advising his readers to assume she was born before the 26th of April, 1763.

On the death of her husband, when Amy was still of tender age, Mrs. Lyon withdrew from Great Neston, and carrying the child over the mouth of the Dee, returned to her native district of Flintshire, where she established herself near her mother, if she did not find a home *in* her mother's cottage, either in the town of Hawarden or in one of the townships of that wide and far-reaching parish. Born in Cheshire, Lady Hamilton was reared from childhood's earlier term to the legal age of discretion in Flintshire. It was in the parish of Hawarden (famous throughout Great Britain as Mr. Gladstone's place of abode) that she

grew from a lovely nurseling to a tall, straight, shapely, singularly agile, and marvellously beautiful girl.

Little is known of this period of her remarkable career ; but a few certain and indisputable facts afford a general view of her life from the date of her settlement in Flintshire till she quitted Hawarden and (probably before the end of her fifteenth year) was taken to London.

One of the pleasant features of Emma Hamilton's story is the affectionate intercourse she maintained with her mother in every stage of her adventurous life till they were separated for ever by the great breaker of all human ties. It was rare for the mother and daughter to be away from one another for several months at a time. During the several years of Emma's residence in Edgware Row, near Paddington Green, under Mr. Charles Greville's protection, Emma's mother, if not a regular resident in the Edgware Row house, was so frequent a visitor there, that she may be fairly rated as one of that gentleman's domestic establishment. On going for the first time from London to Naples, Emma had her mother for her travelling-companion. On becoming the wife of His Britannic Majesty's Minister at the Neapolitan Court, she kept her mother by her side. However stately the palace of which the daughter became mistress, one of its stateliest apartments was assigned to the mother for a residence. However exalted the daughter's friends, the mother was introduced to them as a person with a title to their esteem and affectionate consideration. On taking Lady Hamilton to her confidence and the inmost chamber of her

heart, the Queen of Naples rendered Mrs. Cadogan the courtesies appropriate to a woman of honourable degree. That the mother and daughter maintained this close association, was the more creditable to the latter, because the brilliant woman of the world was alive to her mother's defects of style, and aware that the great and high-born English ladies, who made Mrs. Cadogan's acquaintance in her daughter's *salon*, saw at a glance that Lady Hamilton's mother was not, in the conventional sense of the term,—a gentlewoman. At Dresden, in October, 1800, after taking a first view of 'the Nelson party,' Mrs. Richard Trench (the late Archbishop's mother) wrote in her diary, 'And Mrs. Cadogan, Lady Hamilton's mother, is—what one might expect.' Conscious that this was the way in which English gentlewomen regarded Mrs. Cadogan, and in confidence spoke of her to one another, the daughter never felt ashamed of her mother, but at all times and in all scenes, delighting in her society, loved her completely and passionately.

At the same time, while bearing herself thus affectionately to her parent, Emma Hamilton, in the brightest and most intoxicating passages of her long term of social triumphs, was never wanting in thoughtfulness for her old grandmother in Flintshire. Writing from Caserta to the Hon. Charles Greville on 4th December, 1792 (when she had been Sir William Hamilton's wife just upon fifteen months), she said,

'I will trouble you with my own affairs, as you are so good as to interest yourself about me. You must know, I send my grandmother every christmas twenty pounds, and so I ought. I have 2 hundred a-year for nonsense, and it

would be hard [if] I could not give her twenty pounds, when she has so often given me her last shilling. As Sir William is ill, I cannot ask him for the order; but, if you will get the twenty pounds and send it to her, you will do me [the] greatest favour; for, if the time passes without [her] hearing from me, she may imagine I have forgot her. And I would not keep her poor old heart in suspense for the world, and as she [h]as heard of my circumstances (I don't know how), but she is prudent, and therefore, pray, lose no time, and Sir W^m. will send you the order. You know her direction—Mrs. Kidd, Howerden [*i.e.* Hawarden], Flintshire. Could you not write her a line from me, and send [it] to her, and tell her by my order, and she may write to you, and send me her answer? For I cannot divest myself of my original feelings. It will contribute to my happiness, and I am sure you will assist to make me happy. Tell her, every year she shall have twenty pounds. The fourth of November last, I had a dress on that cost twenty-five pounds, as it was Gala at Court; and, believe me, I felt unhappy all the while I had it on. Excuse the trouble I give you, and believe me, Your sincere—EMMA HAMILTON.'

When Emma Hamilton wrote in this simple and womanly way to her husband's favourite nephew, Sir William Hamilton had been fifteen days in bed suffering from a severe attack of bilious fever. Though the crisis of the illness was over, the patient was still in utter prostration, and his wife, who had been his sedulous nurse throughout the long days and nights of his pain and peril, was scarcely less exhausted by wifely service than he by bodily distress. Emma may therefore be credited with more than ordinary thoughtfulness for her old grandmother at far-away Hawarden, when she wrote at such a moment to London, for the mere purpose of sparing her the annoyance of feeling herself forgotten. Moreover, Emma Hamilton was less than just to herself in speak-

ing of the allowance of two hundred a-year as an allowance for mere trifles and 'nonsense.' Her entire income for her personal expenses, it was the whole sum on which she was required by Sir William Hamilton to clothe herself (already in frequent attendance on the Queen of Naples) and also to clothe Mrs. Cadogan, besides being the only fund she had at her command for gifts to friends, gratuities to the many people having claims on her bounty, and all the various incidental expenses of herself and her mother. No doubt Sir William Hamilton was wont to make her handsome additional presents, but this two hundred a-year was all the income of money, with which his wife had to meet the manifold charges of a lady playing a notable part at a luxurious court. Sufficient to maintain good old Mrs. Kidd in all the comfort and dignity she required or could enjoy, the tithe of this not exorbitant revenue, with so many demands upon it, was a munificent allowance from a grandchild in Emma Hamilton's financial position to a grandmother of Dame Kidd's social degree.

Had they ruled her with severity in her childhood, had they thwarted and worried her in her infancy, as the children of rude people are sometimes worried and thwarted by their parents and lawful guardians, so essentially generous and loyal a woman as Emma Hamilton would not have failed to render her mother and grandmother a full measure of filial duty. But she was even more sensitive and fervid than generous and loyal. The lovely girl, who lived for something more than four years under Mr. Charles Greville's roof in Paddington, was a girl whose eyes brightened

with tears at the slightest kindness that was offered to her, but flashed with anger at every insult or mere slight that was put upon her. Acutely sensitive of kind treatment, and pathetically grateful for the most trifling benefaction, she rose in quick mutiny—without heed for the petty policies that are so influential over ordinary natures—against everyone who ventured to treat her harshly or in any way disrespectfully. The woman, who was constituted thus finely and fiercely, would not have loved her mother so tenderly and devotedly, nor have shown so much delicate care for her grandmother's feelings, had they been wanting in tenderness to her, in those far-away days in far-away Flintshire, when she was under their government. Whilst begging her nephew to send the twenty pounds punctually to Mrs. Kidd of 'Howerden,' the ambassador's wife remembered how often in former time she had received her good, dear granny's freely given 'last shilling.'

Whilst training her tenderly, I have no doubt that Mrs. Kidd and Mrs. Lyon trained their child in the ways of goodness. Apart from the vehemence and unruliness of her fervid and somewhat capricious temper, which she in later time reduced with characteristic resoluteness and good sense to commendable orderliness, she seems to have had no serious failing, on first coming to London, and to this negative certificate in her favour, it may be asserted positively that she possessed several good qualities, for which young people are not always remarkable. It is much to say to the credit of a girl of her humble extraction, that she was singularly truthful,—so truthful, indeed,

that she might be fairly described as incapable of falsehood. Quick to sympathise with the distresses of others, the emotional girl was quick to empty her pocket of its last penny, for the alleviation of wretchedness falling casually under her view. That she was constitutionally fearless appears from the way in which she distinguished herself as a horse-woman and won a reputation for courage in the hunting-field, during a brief sojourn at Up Park, Sir Harry Featherstone's Sussex seat, when she was some seventeen, or possibly eighteen years of age. It should also be stated clearly and strongly to her advantage, that, in spite of lamentable deviations from the path which no woman can forsake without injury to her reputation, she was a delicate and pure-minded girl.

Had she been wanting in natural delicacy and whiteness of soul, had there been a taint of uncleanness and spontaneous impurity in her moral nature, the quality would not have failed to reveal itself in the frank, communicative, unconsidered, hasty, ill-spelt and ill-written letters, which she was in the habit of scribbling to the men with whom she lived in the closest confidence, containing much that no woman of high education could have written, and but few passages that do not reveal the slenderness of her scholastic attainments. Lady Hamilton's letters seldom afford indications of unusual intellectual vigour or subtlety. For the most part, her earlier letters may be described as the outpourings of a vain, simple, unrefined, egotistic young woman, whose inordinate vanity alone saved her from being in every mental and moral respect, an altogether common-place young

woman. Seldom displaying any of her finer qualities, never by any chance doing justice to them, they are a body of scribblings in which she usually appears to great disadvantage. Yet in all her free scribbling to men with whom she lived freely, one never comes on the faintest trace of the particular defilement, from which I do not hesitate to declare her absolutely free. Only once in all the many incautious letters of her pen, which have come under my perusal, does she use any word, that a man of good taste would shrink from reading aloud to a company of gentlewomen. On this solitary occasion she used a strong Shakespearian expression; and it is to her credit that she used it, for the adequate avowal of her disgust at the evil counsel given her by a man whom she had hitherto thought incapable of counselling her to her shame.

In crediting Amy Lyon with these various good qualities, on the strength of manifold indisputable facts of her curious and painful story, I say no more to her praise than the man, who of all her contemporaries knew her most intimately and precisely, said to her honour from long personal experience. After living with her for years in the closest friendship, the Hon. Charles Greville declared her singularly truthful and honest, generous and compassionate, abounding in womanly pride and womanly delicacy, self-respecting and phenomenally unselfish, dangerously emotional but winningly docile to the patron who, treating her with invariable kindness and a discerning sympathy, knew how to render her several foibles subsidiary to her several virtues.

That in her childhood Amy Lyon received rather more scholastic training than was usually given to the girls of the English peasantry in George the Third's earlier time, may be inferred from what has been said of her ability to scribble ill-spelt letters, when she was still in her teens. The education she received at Hawarden was slender, but it gave her the advantage over the majority of maidens of her degree, at a time when it was usual for a prosperous farmer's daughter to sign her marriage-lines with a cross. Reading and writing after a fashion, Amy was not altogether unacquainted with arithmetic, when she turned her back 'for good' on the Hawarden school-house, and went off with a light heart and smiling face (the loveliest of childish faces) to her 'first place,' as nurse-girl in the household of Mr. Thomas of Hawarden, who in later years heard strange stories of Amy's doings in London, from his brother-in-law Boydell, in due course Mr. Alderman Boydell of that city, and from his son, Mr. Honoratus Leigh Thomas—(also in due course) the eminent surgeon of Leicester Place.

The date of Amy's entrance into her 'first place,' like the date of her withdrawal from it, is unknown; but she must have been still a child, when she first put a nursemaid's cap on the crown of her auburn hair, and made her first courtesy to master and mistress. It is also certain that she did not hold the place for any considerable term of years. If she went into service on or about the fourteenth anniversary of her birthday (26th April, 1777), she was younger than nursing-girls usually are, in families of substance

and respectability. On the other hand, the adventures of her earlier years in London indicate that she cannot have come to London for the first time at a date much subsequent to the sixteenth anniversary of her birthday,—26th April, 1779. If she was just sixteen years of age on leaving Wales to seek her fortune in a great city, barely three years intervened between her arrival in London and her first visit to Romney's studio in 1782,—a period strangely short for all that is known to have befallen her between her migration from Flintshire and her introduction to the famous painter.

If she had completed her fourteenth year when she entered Mr. Thomas's service, I do not think she can have been more than six months in her first place. Bearing in mind that it is only an assumption, readers may assume that Amy came up to London under her mother's wing in the autumn of 1778, when she was about fifteen years and six months old.

A few leaves more, and instead of dealing with conjectural or approximate dates, we shall arrive at the point from which the dates of Amy's fortunes and misfortunes can be stated to a day.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST YEARS IN LONDON.

Amy Lyon's Arrival in London—Chatham Place, Blackfriars—The Girl's Phenomenal Beauty—She Becomes the Servant of a Tradesman in St. James's Market—She is Lady-Companion to a Lady of Fashion—Her Exertions for a Friend in Trouble—Her First Great Error—Who was the Villain?—Captain John Willet Payne, R.N.—Sir Henry Fetherstonehaugh, Baronet—'Up Park,' co. Sussex—Emily's 'Giddiness' and 'Wildness'—More Trouble for the Young Adventuress.

1778—1781 A.D.

FLOUTING the heralds, Beauty, like Genius, confounds the simple people, who are wont to speak of the higher types of personal attractiveness as indications of aristocratic extraction, and the fruit of ancestral nobility. The homes of our Earls would have been sought in vain, for a girl so lovely in feature and form, so brightly delicate in colour, so irresistibly captivating in address and style, as the damsel with auburn hair who on leaving a Flintshire cabin journeyed to Chatham Place, Blackfriars, London, where she lived for a while as a nursery-maid in the family of Dr. Budd, one of the physicians of Bartholomew's Hospital.

On taking her 'second place,' Amy Lyon had not

attained to the perfection of her girlish charms. She was still only coming into her heritage of historic beauty; but already she had the elements of striking comeliness—a profusion of auburn hair, a forehead broad but none too high for facial symmetry, finely-arched and finely-pencilled eyebrows, blue eyes whose shyness was strangely winning, a delicate nose, whose aquiline curve was so slight as to escape notice at the first view, a short upper lip, a dainty mouth, already giving promise of the voluptuous charms it displays on Romney's canvas, a chin of incomparable shapeliness, good teeth, a complexion bright and pure as an angel's colour, a countenance deliciously eloquent of sensibility and (in restful moments) of seraphic sweetness, a head set like a bit of antique art on the long fair neck, a figure slight and tall but not so tall as to be inconveniently conspicuous, a shape whose contours already showed how perfect they would be in the season of their maturity. When this nursery-girl tripped along the street on a speedy errand, or paced the pavement with a babe in her arms, beggars blessed her for her beauty, whilst people of better breeding stopped as she passed them, and regarded her silently till she disappeared from view.

It is unknown how long she stayed in her 'second place.' But, though the girl of fervid temper and perilous sensibility was ill-qualified to endure the restraints and salutary discipline of domestic service, it is probable she remained for a greater number of months at Chatham Place, than in either of the two menial positions she subsequently held in London,

before taking the first sad step to all that is lamentable in her scarcely less tragic than triumphant story.

Pettigrew says that, after leaving Dr. Budd's family, she seems from report 'to have engaged herself to a dealer in St. James's Market.' What this tradesman dealt in is left wholly to the reader's imagination. But from the little that is told of her stay with this master, it may be inferred that the tradesman's shop was visited by gentlewomen, on whom Amy was required to wait. Anyhow it is said, on authority no clearer to the present writer than it seems to have been to Dr. Pettigrew, that the girl was waiting in this shop, when she won the approval of 'a lady of fashion,' who was so delighted with her looks, air, and manner, as to invite her to a position more suitable to a young person of her striking beauty and manifest refinement of nature. Accepting the invitation, Amy (or Emily, as she may have styled herself by this time) became the lady-companion of her patroness, and was introduced to the people who, on evenings of reception, thronged the drawing-rooms of the gentlewoman of fashion. If all this is true story (and I am, at least, disposed to think it based upon fact), the lady of fashion and the dealer of St. James's Market were perhaps controlled by the same motive in their dealings with the Flintshire beauty. The former may have engaged Emily, in the hope that so charming a waitress would draw new customers to his shop. The latter may have lured the girl from St. James's Market, in order to render her drawing-rooms more attractive to fashionable idlers.

The story goes further in a way, that shows like truth, even if it be not truthful. Having passed from the shop, where she was only a waitress, to the drawing-room, where she figured as a young gentlewoman of exceeding loveliness and sensibility, Emily was suddenly plunged into violent and altogether genuine grief by tidings that a young man—one of her old Flintshire friends—had been seized by a press-gang in the London streets, and carried on board a vessel lying in the Thames. Unless powerful influence could compass the poor fellow's release, he would be sent to sea, and lost for years, possibly for ever, to his wife and babes in Flintshire. Ever as quick to shed tears for the wretchedness of others as to shed them in gratitude for kindness shown to herself, Emily hastened to a naval captain of her acquaintance. On coming to his presence, she pleaded for the captive and his darlings in Wales with all the vehemence of her compassionate nature, and all the art of a practised advocate. Seizing the most pitiful points of the case, she spoke of her friend's good qualities; his reasons for coming to town; the dismay and anguish that would possess his wife and children on hearing what had befallen their bread-winner. Uttered by a woman of no personal charms, whose voice was wanting in melody, the prayer would have stirred the heart of the officer to whom it was made. Coming from a girl, whose musical voice was one of her several superb endowments, the petition was irresistible. Imploring her to cease weeping, the young and handsome sailor promised he would do his utmost to set the Flintshire lad at liberty. He

kept his word, and his 'utmost' was successful. Unfortunately for Emily, the affair did not end with the accomplishment of her purpose. The officer, who had done her a slight service, asked her for the greatest of all favours in return, and, in the extravagance of her gratitude for his kindness to her, Emily granted him all that he asked. The brief liaison ended before Emily was a mother. A few months later, her faithless suitor was at sea, and she was clothed with shame. This is one version of a story that is told in various ways.

The saddest part of the story is certainly true. Emily was delivered of a female infant; and, though I throw Emily's birth a full year behind the date at which Pettigrew says she was born, I do not see how she can well have completed her seventeenth year, when her first-born child was put for the first time in her arms. But I question whether Captain (afterwards Rear Admiral) John Willet Payne was the father of the child, and the villain of this doleful tale. A man of fashion, who lived to enjoy the especial favour of the Prince of Wales, he may perhaps have been capable of ruining the foolish girl. As the world went in the closing years of the last century, men of the finest fashion could sometimes boast of such conquests, as no libertine would avow in these somewhat better times. But had he seduced Emily Lyon, a gentleman of Captain Payne's high spirit, social quality, and abundant means would scarcely have neglected to make something like an adequate provision for his child's nurture, education, and establishment in life. Making no such provision for the

offspring of his villainy, the father of Emily Lyon's first-born child left the mother and her friends to rear the infant as they best could without his assistance. For several years the little girl was cared for, with almost paternal beneficence, by the Honourable Charles Greville, whose goodness to the child of shame was not the least of Emma Hart's reasons for thinking him one of the very best of human kind. In later time, the charges of the girl's maintenance and schooling devolved on Sir William Hamilton, who, at least for a considerable time, and possibly to the end of his life, was kept in ignorance of the child's parentage. Pettigrew, and the several writers who follow him in respect to matters touching Lady Hamilton, have no doubt that Captain Willet Payne was Emily Lyon's seducer. The careful biographer would probably have hesitated to state so much to the shame of a gallant officer, had he known how Emily's 'little Emily' was neglected by her sire.

In her hour of pain and peril, Emily was cared for tenderly by her mother; and, soon after her accouchement, her child was conveyed to Hawarden, and confided to Mrs. Kidd, who had charge of the infant for some four or five years.

Having taken a step she could scarcely retrace, it is not surprising that Emily Lyon decided, after a brief conflict with her 'better self,' to persist in a way of life, into which she may be said to have been carried by a romantic surprise. On recovering from her confinement, and regaining her brightest looks, she committed herself to the protection of Sir Henry Fetherstonehaugh, a dissolute and hard-riding baronet,

who, living with his lovely toy in London, also took her with him, more than once, to his seat (Up Park) in Sussex, where she delighted his friends with her beauty, her vivacious temper, her racy prattle, her skill in mimicry, her equestrian address, and the heartiness of a manner that, without being boisterous, was remarkable for cordial naturalness, and for perfect freedom from the affectation usually apparent in the demeanour of an emancipated serving-girl playing the part of a gentlewoman.

Doran, who seldom spoke on insufficient grounds, says that 'the baronet was nearly ruined by the extravagant profusion into which he plunged for her sake'; but too much has certainly been made of any financial recklessness of which Emily was guilty during her brief associations with the Squire of Up Park. Free-handed with her pence, when she was a nursing-maid, Emily was for a while no less free-handed with the guineas, lavished upon her at this stage of her career by her especial patron, and the guineas that were at the same time occasionally given her by at least one of his male acquaintance. But I have grounds for a strong opinion that, whilst she was Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's mistress, she was not fairly chargeable with any such outrageous extravagance as Doran's words imply. As one of Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's friends, the Honourable Charles Greville was familiar with Emily during the short term of her domestication with the Sussex baronet. They were indeed so intimate, that Emily accepted money from him, when she ought not to have taken a gift of money from anyone but her

protector. In the interval between her rupture with Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh and her establishment in Paddington Green, Mr. Greville could seriously remind her of a wasteful expenditure of a certain 'five guineas and half-a-guinea,' as an example of the kind of financial recklessness, of which she might never be guilty, on coming to live permanently with him. Had she been so inordinately profuse of Sir Harry's resources, as successive writers have represented, Mr. Greville, who was perfectly acquainted with her tastes and habits, would scarcely have selected so trivial an instance of extravagance for a subject of serious expostulation. Had she nearly ruined the Squire of Up Park, so wary a gentleman as the Honourable Charles Greville would scarcely have decided to take her under his peculiar protection.

In his later time, Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh could speak of Lady Hamilton with regard, and write to her in terms of sincere respect,—the tenour of the words he spoke about her and wrote to her being scarcely reconcileable with the assertion, that he had cause to remember her as a woman who, in her girlhood, had almost brought him to financial perdition. It has been already observed that their intimacy was not of long duration. Though Emily certainly loved the baronet, when she first committed herself to his care, it was Mr. Greville's opinion, that she never had any strong hold either on his affections or on his taste. Far from being surprised to hear that Sir Harry had dismissed her abruptly, after living with her for something less than a year, the baronet's action in throwing her over was altogether in accord-

ance with Mr. Greville's expectations. It does not follow that Sir Harry was without excuse for pitching aside his plaything. After the wont of foolish girls, who have distinguished themselves in naughtiness, Emily, in this stage of her career, gloried in what she was pleased to call her 'giddiness' and 'wildness.' A year or two later, when she was leading a quiet and comparatively decorous life, she still gloried in her former 'giddiness' and 'wildness,' and took pleasure in reminding Mr. Greville how 'giddy' and 'wild' she had once been. It is easy to conceive that, in her giddiness and wildness, she gave Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh serious cause for displeasure, and was even guilty of misconduct that justified him in bidding her go any way, that was out of his way. If he was lavish of money to her so long as she enjoyed his favour, he was less than properly free-handed to her when he dismissed her, within four months of the time when she expected to give birth to a child, of which he would be the father. Giving her just enough money for her travelling expenses to Flintshire, he told her to go to Hawarden. Taking the money, Emily set her face northwards, in the last month of 1781. According to my computation, she was now just about eighteen years and eight months of age. By Dr. Pettigrew's computation, she was still no more than seventeen years old.

CHAPTER III.

A MATTER OF CONTROVERSY.

Graham the Quack—His 'Temple of Health'—His Lectures—The 'Goddess of Health'—The *Blackwood* Essayist—His Argument—How It Falls to the Ground—The Scandalous 'Memoirs of Lady Hamilton'—Pettigrew's Sources of Information—Mrs. Richard Trench on Lady Hamilton's Feet—Lady Hamilton's Accomplishments—Her 'Attitudes'—Examples of 'the Attitudes' published by Sir William Hamilton—State of the Case—Concluding Suggestion.

1781 A.D.

DID Emily take part in the performances which, in 1780 and the three next following years, drew people of fashion, together with people of no fashion, to be mentioned with approval, to the entertainments which still keep Dr. Graham in the recollection of his posterity? The *Blackwood* essayist on Lady Hamilton (1860) stigmatizes Graham as an 'infamous quack,' whereas he was nothing worse than an arrant humbug. In bare justice to him, it must be admitted that, though an arrant impostor, he was an entertaining and rather clever fellow. A person of some education and an ingratiating address, he professed to have discovered the best means of combating disease, and giving people the largest possible measure

of bodily health. Holding his 'Temple of Health' at first in the Adelphi, and subsequently in Pall Mall, he treated some of his patients with mud-baths and earth-baths, in the garden behind the house, in which he delivered lectures, for adequate payment, on disease and what he conceived the best way of curing disease. To show that his lectures were not altogether unfavourable to social morality, it is enough to say that he was a strong advocate of temperance in diet, and seized occasions for assuring his auditors that, if they would enjoy good health, they should, whilst eating and drinking with habitual moderation, take as much bodily exercise as possible in the open air.

On the other hand, something might be urged to the discredit of the lectures, that were delivered to assemblies of persons of both sexes. Laying himself out for practice amongst the ladies, he spoke rather too fully of what dear old Samuel Richardson designated 'the parturient circumstances,' and greatly exceeded the license accorded by common consent to medical humbugs, when he spoke of his famous 'celestial bed,' which he let out at twenty guineas a night to newly-married couples, in order that they should have reasonable hopes and the soundest scientific assurance of soon becoming the parents of lovely offspring. But a hundred years since, when every young lady of a most fashionable boarding-school used to complete her strictly scholastic course by making a set of baby-linen, social delicacy was not so squeamish as at the present time in regard to free speech about the circumstances, so felicitously described by the author of 'Sir Charles Grandison.'

Let no one charge the good people of Edinburgh with narrowness and intolerance, because they discovered indecency in Dr. Graham's lectures, and instead of consulting him about their ailments committed him to the Tolbooth. In this matter the northern capital was half-a-century in advance of London, as she has been on other matters. But as life went in London, when George the Third had reigned some twenty years, Graham's 'Temple of Health' was no such scandalous place as the Blackwood essayist imagines. Nor was the part, which Emily is said to have enacted at the services of the Temple, so indecent as to make it a scandalous imputation on her honour, to say that she filled it. By some writers it has been asserted, that Emily used to display her beauty at the doctor's entertainments, under the name and character of *Hebe Vestina*. But the most reliable—or, out of due respect to the able essayist, let us say the least unreliable,—version of the story is that Emily was the *Hygeia* of the notorious Temple of Health, and in the character of the long-robed goddess used to stand for an hour at a time on a dais, alike to her own satisfaction and the delight of the doctor's visitors.

The Blackwood essayist denies that Lady Hamilton was, at any time of her life, capable of conduct so unbeseeming a gentlewoman, and impossible to a self-respecting member of the gentler sex. He insists that the story, so discreditable to Lady Hamilton's sense of propriety, rests altogether on an impudent statement of the dubious *Memoirs of Lady Hamilton* (1815), that appeared soon after her death.

And he argues, that known and sure dates disprove the abominable accusation.

On this last point, the essayist argues with characteristic cleverness and force ; but the whole argument—compactly fitted and cogent though it is to a reader, ignorant of the real facts of Emily's story—drops to nothing, under the certain demonstration that the girl came to London considerably before the year 1780. The essayist's case is this,—that Graham first opened his first 'Temple of Health' in 1780 ; that Emily came to London and entered Dr. Budd's service in 1780 ; that in successively acting as Dr. Budd's nursery-maid, waiting in the shop of St. James's Market, playing the part of lady-companion to the gentlewoman of fashion, officiating as Captain Payne's mistress, and living in the same capacity with Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh, she was so fully engaged from the date (1780) of her arrival in town to the date of her first visit to Romney's studio at the beginning of 1782, that there was no passage of the period, in which she can have exhibited herself, in the way of regular duty, at the 'Temple of Health ;' that, as she was already living with Mr. Greville at the time of her introduction to Romney, and as Mr. Greville (with whom she lived for years) certainly would not have permitted her to make so shameless an exhibition of her beauty, she cannot have been Dr. Graham's paid goddess at any time subsequent to the beginning of 1782, and anterior to the close of 1784, when Graham's career of imposture terminated.

All this argumentative structure falls with a clatter,

like a house built with cards, before the fact that she came to London considerably earlier than the essayist was aware. It appears from an unimpeachable document, soon to be printed in this work, that Emily's rupture with Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh was an incident of December, 1781. It is certain that, at the date of that occurrence, she was within four months of her second accouchement. The girl, who in December, 1781, had lived with Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh some twelve months, who before living with Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh had given birth to a child, and who before quitting the beaten path of moral orderliness had filled three different places of service since her arrival in town, *must have* come to London considerably before 1780.

Does the story come to us from the scandalous book that was published so late as 1815 by an anonymous author? Dr. Pettigrew, an honourably known man of letters, was not likely to take his facts from so worthless a book as the anonymous *Memoirs of Lady Hamilton*. That he did not get his version of the Temple-of-Health story from the 'Memoirs' appears from the fact that, whilst the concocter of the 'Memoirs' tells how Emma Hart was the *Hebe Vestina* of the 'Temple,' Nelson's biographer describes her as playing the part of 'The Goddess of Health.' A man of science and a member of a medical family, Pettigrew had been on friendly terms with several eminent physicians and surgeons who had followed their profession in London, when Graham 'was to the fore.' Knowing Dr. Budd personally, he knew other persons, who were much better

qualified than the author of the trashy 'Memoirs' to inform him of Lady Hamilton's earlier doings. Speaking of the Emily Lyon of the present chapter—not of the Lady Hamilton of a later period—Pettigrew says, 'I have met with many in my own circle of friends to whom she was well known.' The friend of the physician, in whose family Emily had lived as a nursery-maid,—a physician, who like all the other doctors of his day, had watched Graham's proceedings with a kind of jealous curiosity,—Pettigrew certainly had access to a few exceptionally good sources of information respecting Amy *alias* Emily *alias* Emma Lyon *alias* Hart. In what he says of this curious young person, he sometimes speaks diffidently, and with an indication of the second-rate and unsatisfactory nature of the evidence at the back of his statements. But he seems to have had no doubt whatever that Emily was Graham's 'Goddess of Health.'

How about the impropriety of the performance? Was it of so indecorous, so indecent a character, that chivalric concern for a woman, who has strong claims on her posterity for generous judgment, should dispose us to think her incapable of so wanton and wide a departure from the lines of feminine delicacy?

As he was a member of a scholarly family, and had a mind in some degree touched by classical culture, it may be taken for granted that Graham gave the young woman, who figured in his service as the Goddess of Health, a costume suitable to the character. In works of art, Hygeia wears a long robe, and feeds a serpent from a cup. She is draped even

to the ground. Beautiful in every other part of her person, that came to the view of her multitudinous admirers, Lady Hamilton had graceless ankles and large feet. Mrs. Richard Trench, indeed, went so far as to record, that the famous Beauty's feet were 'hideous;' and Mrs. Trench's account of the lady's appearance—at a time, by-the-by, when she had survived the hey-day of her loveliness—is so precise in its details, and so accurate as to points in respect to which it can be checked, that I do not hesitate to think it substantially truthful in this particular. It must be conceded that, if not absolutely 'hideous' in her girlhood, Lady Hamilton's feet and ankles—in the days of her association with Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh—were at least deficient in shapeliness. If, then, Emily consented to act as Dr. Graham's 'Goddess of Health,' she may well have congratulated herself on being required to wear a dress that, whilst it revealed some of her finest personal endowments, effectually concealed her defective points. Dr. Graham required of his 'Goddess' in the way of actual performance little more than that she should stand on a dais in his classically-decorated lecture-room, feeding, or pretending to feed, a serpent from a cup. What was there in this performance so repugnant to natural feminine delicacy, that Emily should shrink from the part, in which she is said to have distinguished herself? A vain girl, with a lovely face which she delighted in offering to general admiration, and rather awkward feet which she was careful to keep as much as possible out of sight, she would naturally and necessarily have thought it a congenial

pastime, rather than an irksome duty, to be the Goddess of Professor Graham's chamber of audience.

Was there aught in Lady Hamilton's pursuits and amusements to dispose the reader to think it highly improbable that, in her wild and giddy girlhood, she could thus have exhibited her beauty day after day to a roomful of delighted gazers? Was there aught in her amusements and pursuits to dispose the reader to hold the contrary opinion? The kind of performance, by which she is said to have delighted Graham's particular public in the Temple of Health, is the very same kind of performance in which she excelled and delighted throughout the brightest period of her triumphant years.

After passing through a long and laborious education, under the sympathetic direction first of the Honourable Charles Greville, and then of Sir William Hamilton, Emily was the mistress of several accomplishments—two of them being remarkable and singularly effective accomplishments. Playing the piano with some ability, she sketched with pencil and brush well enough for a lady-amateur. A brilliant conversational linguist, she spoke French well, and Italian admirably. An incomparable mimic, she would in a strangely short time have spoken like a native the language of any people with whom she was thrown. She was an amateur-actress of unusual merit. At the same time, she sang superbly, though musical connoisseurs had reason to regret that her magnificently rich and strong voice was associated with a slightly defective ear. Her other singularly striking and telling accomplishment was dramatic skill in *attitudes*,

as she used to call them,—that is to say, skill in those theatrical performances, that are now-a-days more felicitously styled *tableaux-vivants*.

A fine connoisseur of music, Mrs. Richard Trench did not altogether approve of Lady Hamilton's singing, which, like her appearance, had been less open to disparaging criticism than it was in October, 1800,—the month and year in which the two ladies saw a good deal of one another at Dresden. Disliking her vocal style, and declaring her voice deficient in flexibility, Mrs. Trench, like Goethe, discovered that, though she had upon the whole 'a good and very strong voice,' Lady Hamilton 'was frequently out of tune.' But though the songstress, who, nine years earlier, had been offered two thousand guineas for the season to sing at the London opera-house, fell short of her severe critic's standard of vocal excellence, Mrs. Trench was greatly delighted with Lady Hamilton's attitudes.

'Oct. 7.—Breakfasted with Lady Hamilton,' the critical lady wrote in the Dresden leaves of her diverting diary, 'and saw her represent in succession the best statues and paintings extant. She assumes their attitude, expression, and drapery with great facility, and swiftness, and accuracy. Several Indian shawls, a chair, some antique vases, a wreath of roses, a tambourine, and a few children are her whole apparatus. She stands at one end of the room, with a strong light to her left, and every window closed. Her hair is short, dressed like an antique, and her gown a simple calico chemise, very easy, with loose sleeves to the wrist It is a beautiful performance, amusing to the most ignorant, and highly interesting to lovers of art. The chief of her imitations are from the antique. Each representation lasts about ten minutes After showing her attitudes, she sang, and I accompanied her.'

Wherever she dwelt, wherever she went, Lady

Hamilton performed these speechless dramas. Acting them almost daily, she acted them everywhere and anywhere, to win the plaudits of new admirers, or even of a single admirer. In default of new spectators, she acted them again and again to people who had already seen them a hundred times. Showing her attitudes at court to delight the Queen of Naples and the royal children, just as she had in 1791 shown them in crowded London drawing-rooms, she went on 'showing' them in her own salons at Naples, and in the salons of the Neapolitan nobility, to the last hour of her long residence in southern Europe. Mrs. Trench was only one of hundreds, ay, thousands of persons, to whom she showed them during her long journey of countless stages and several tedious *détours*, from Trieste to Vienna, and from Vienna to London. It was the same after her return to England in 1800. She went through her series of attitudes any number of times at her house in Piccadilly and at Merton.

There are grounds for thinking that Sir William Hamilton had seen enough, and more than enough, of 'the attitudes,' before he died in the spring of 1803. But in Italy he was so passionate an admirer of his incomparable Emma's artistic attitudes, that he employed Frederick Rehberg (Historical Painter at Rome, in the Prussian King's service) to make sketches of the entire series of *tableaux-vivants*, that were engraved by Thomas Pirolis, and published in the form of a book, having this description on the title-page,—'Drawings faithfully copied from the Nature at Naples, and with Permission dedicated to

The Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, His Britannic Majesty's Envoy Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, By his humble Servant Frederick Rehberg, Historical painter in his Prussian Majesty's Service at Rome. Engraved by Thomas Pirolis.' Thirteen of the engravings of this curious and rare book are preserved in the Gardner collection of engravings, illustrative of old London, belonging to my friend, John Gardner, of Park House, St. John's Wood, N.W.

It appears, therefore, that throughout her brightest and most triumphant years Lady Hamilton delighted in displaying her beauty in a series of *tableaux-vivants*, similar to the theatrical performance with which she is said to have heightened the attractiveness of Dr. Graham's fashionable entertainment. Hence the story of her performances at the Temple of Health is altogether in accordance with one of her strongest and most characteristic tastes—her favourite way of amusing herself and others—during the most famous part of her career. To some readers it may appear that the lady's strong taste for exhibiting herself in 'the attitudes,' and her insatiable appetite for the applause which those performances brought to her, originated in the delight she experienced in aiding Dr. Graham.

If Emily was at any time Dr. Graham's 'Goddess of Health,' that time must have been in 1781. Her time in 1780, the year in which Graham established himself in the Adelphi, has been accounted for in a way to make it highly improbable that she figured in so divine a capacity in that year. After December, 1781, there is no point of her life in which she is

likely to have displayed herself for Graham's advantage, either at the Adelphi or in Pall Mall. But though, in the absence of conclusive evidence to the point, I should not be justified in stating authoritatively that she *did* for awhile enact the part of the Adelphi 'Goddess,' I think it at least highly probable that Pettigrew was right in the main and central part of his statement. 'Threatened,' says Pettigrew, 'to be ejected from her lodgings by her landlord, she was induced by an empiric of great notoriety, a Dr. Graham, then delivering lectures in the Adelphi, to exhibit herself under his auspices as a perfect model of health and beauty.' On recovering from her first accouchement, at the close of 1780 or the beginning of 1781, Emily may be presumed to have been in urgent financial difficulty. Before putting herself under Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's protection, she may well have been for a brief while without a penny in her purse, and in debt to the landlord of her humble lodging. At such a crisis, shrinking from the thought of seeking admirers on the pavement, desirous of earning her livelihood without naughtiness, she may have seized with grateful alacrity the offer, which Graham is said to have made her. She may have fascinated Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh during one of her graceful and quite innocent performances at the Temple of Health. If it was so, Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh, a gentleman whose profligacy exhibited no redeeming traits of refinement, may have permitted his mistress to perform at the Adelphi lecture-room, when he did not need her society. A document is in existence which at least gives this

suggestion a colour of probability. Writing to Emily on the 10th of January, 1782, respecting some of her recent indiscretions, and Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's treatment of her, Mr. Greville said, 'It was your duty to deserve good treatment, and it gave me great concern to see you imprudent the first time you came to G. from the country, and as the same conduct was repeated when you was last in town, I began to despair of your happiness.' Who or what was 'G'? Did Emily take it for 'Graham,' and know that her correspondent was referring to some imprudence she had committed on returning from Up Park to resume her theatrical place at Graham's establishment?

CHAPTER IV.

FROM FLINTSHIRE TO PADDINGTON GREEN.

A dismal Christmas—A sadder New Year—Amy's Re-appearance at Hawarden—Cold Looks—Hard Words—Busy Gossip-mongers—Information from the Post Office—Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's Silence—Amy in Despair—Her Letter to the Hon. Charles Greville—Editorial Manipulation of her Letters—Style of her Epistles—Mr. Greville's Answer to her Letter—Emily returns to London—Her bad Life in 1781—Her pathetic Confession to Romney—Mr. Greville calls upon Her—His Counsel and Proposal—Emily accepts his Terms—Mr. Greville's Position and Expectations—Paddington Green—Emily's 'New Home'—The House at the Green's north-east Corner—Unavailing Regrets.

1781—1782 A.D.

THE Christmastide of 1781 and the opening days of '82 were a doleful season for poor Emily. The new year came with a burden of sadness for her. Nursing in her breast the knowledge of the state of her health,—the certainty that in some three months she would be again on a bed of pain and peril—the poor and unhappy girl reddened with shame as she crossed the threshold of her old home, and may be imagined to have fallen into tears on vainly essaying to respond with heartiness to her grandmother's cordial welcome. She can have found little joy in nursing the year-old

babe, little Emily, whom the dear old grandmother hastened to put in her arms. She could not, even to save her life and recover Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's favour, have at that moment told her good, too good grandmother, that another child would soon arrive, to be a burden to her; though, Heaven knows that, if the confession had been made then and there, staunch, brave, royal-hearted Dame Kidd would have spoken right kindly to her erring grand-daughter, bade her ask pardon of no one but God, and assured her that, come what might, she should find in her mother's mother a loving grandmother.

A few days Amy (Amy again, now she had returned to her own people) spent in looking up her old playmates in Hawarden. But little joy came to her from doing so. She saw, or felt that she saw, suspicion and distrust of her in their somehow altered faces. For months the Hawarden gossips had been whispering things to her discredit,—about the babe that had found its way so mysteriously to Dame Kidd's cottage, about Dame Kidd's stubborn reticence respecting the infant's parentage, and about the significant tenderness with which Dame Kidd nursed the brat. As she wrote in so many words (one of them being characteristically misspelt) to the Honourable Charles Greville a week or so later, Amy thought her old friends looked coolly on her. Her beauty, still powerful to win kindly words from her former companions of the sterner sex, and dispose them to think people had been talking too fast and bitterly against her, was impotent to mollify the women who regarded her frigidly. Her fine clothes exasperated them. How

came it, they asked of one another, that Amy had become so fine a lady?

Under her grandmother's roof, Amy spent even more time in writing letters, on which she dropped many a tear, than in nursing her baby, over which she wept at times still more profusely. It being observed at the post-office that most of these letters were addressed to Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh, Baronet, of Up Park, co. Sussex, it was soon known to the Hawarden gossips that this Amy thought she had a right (forsooth!) to be for ever scribbling letters to so exalted a personage. It being observed at the Hawarden post-office that no letter stamped with the Sussex post-mark came thither for Amy, it was soon whispered throughout Hawarden that Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh had made up his mind to have nothing more to do with her. On this point, however, there was an opposing whisper. Though Amy had received no letters from Sussex, she was known to have received one or two letters from London through the post,—letters addressed in the handwriting of a gentleman. Possibly, then, Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh was up in London, and was writing to her from London—a suggestion that was vastly displeasing to the more virtuous and severe of the female whisperers.

At the same time, Amy was writing letters to another gentleman; but these letters to another gentleman attracted no particular attention at the Hawarden post-office (addressed though they were to a personage of honour), for the simple reason that the covers of the letters had been addressed for her by

Mr. Greville's own hand, to 'The Hon^{ble}. Mr. Greville, M.P., Portman Square, London.' That she came to Hawarden with a few of these directed covers in her possession points to the existence of a confidential understanding between herself and the gentleman whose name was upon them.

Amy was watched by the Hawarden people wherever she went. They wondered why she took so much trouble to get the certificate of her baptism from the curate of Great Neston. Differing amongst themselves on other questions touching Amy, these busy people were of one mind as to the parentage of the child, who had been for a year in Mrs. Kidd's keeping. It was clear as sunlight to each and all of them, that 'little Emily' was Amy's daughter by Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh.

Amy had not returned to Hawarden altogether without hope of Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's pardon for the offences that had caused him to dismiss her from his society. He might, she feared, persist in his resolve to have no renewal of their intercourse; but, as she journeyed northwards, she was not absolutely hopeless of restoration to his favour. Having, in his anger, given her only enough money for her travelling expenses to her grandmother's cottage, she had thought that, on hearing of her arrival in Flintshire, he would, at the worst, send her money for her urgent wants,—money with which she could pay a few debts, provide for her next accouchement, and pay her way till she should recover from the approaching illness. Of course, the baronet's 'girl' (Mr. Greville's word of description for Amy) had a few bills with milliners

and haberdashers. She had, also, on her hands a maid-servant, whom she could not dismiss, without first paying her the wages that were due to her.

When she had written Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh no less than *seven* letters, without receiving from him a line in answer to any one of them, she saw he would not relent to her. On realizing how utterly she was discarded by her whilom protector, the emotional girl passed into wild panic. The few shillings remaining in her pocket when she re-entered her grandmother's cottage, a few weeks since, had passed from her one by one. She was in debt to the dear grandmother, who had been so good to her and to little Emily. She owed money to London tradesmen, and to her servant. She had grown unfit for domestic service. In London she could pick up a living, at least for a few weeks. But how, without a penny in hand, could she get back to London? If she were there, how could she make provision for the charges of the illness that now would be soon upon her? Time was running on. Already it was the second of January, 1782. Would Mr. Greville help her? He had been kind to her. He had written to her, since she came north. Only yesterday the postman had brought a letter of his writing. Though she had behaved ill to him, he had condescended to write to her, and had bade her write to him in one of the directed envelopes, should mischance put her in need of his help. He had been curious about her age, and made her get 'the certificate' for him. No doubt so kind and honourable a gentleman would send her a gift. But a trifle would not suffice for her

present needs. She wanted so much of him, who had cause, as her conscience told her, to think ill of her.

In her agitation, she caught up a pen, and wrote him the following letter, signed 'Emly Hart,' a signature which shows she had already dropped her rightful surname, but had not yet dropped the Christian name which she assumed on conceiving a distaste for Amy. A few weeks later, acting probably on Mr. Greville's advice, who suggested to her that she would do well to change her name again, the girl became Emma.

'MY DEAR GREVELL,

'Yesterday did I receive your kind letter. It put me in some spirits; for, believe me, I am almost distracted. I have never heard from Sir H., and he is not at now, I am sure. What shall I do? Good God! what shall I do? I have wrote 7 letters, and no answer. I can't come to town caus I [am] out of mony. I have not a farthing to bless my self with, and I think my friends looks cooly on me. I think so. O Grevell, what shall I do? what shall I do? O how your letter affected me, when you wished me happiness. O Grevell, that I was in your position or was in Sir H []! What a happy girl would I have been!—girl indeed! what else am I but a girl in distress—in reall distress? For God's sake, G[revell] write the minet you get this, and only tell me what I am to do I am allmos mad. O, for God's sake, tell me what is to become on me. O dear Grevell, write to me. Grevell adue, and believe [me] yours for ever—EMLY HART.

'Don't tell my mother what distress I am in, and do afford me some comfort.'

This pathetic note, from a girl in distress to a gentleman who had been good to her, is undated, but is endorsed with 'rec^d Jan. 10, '82,'—an endorse-

ment which justifies an editor in ascribing its composition to the 7th or 8th of the month.

It is well that the present writer should here say something of Emily's epistolary style, and state how far he has manipulated her letters, for the reader's advantage. In this printed transcript, Emily's spelling is reproduced in every particular; but the editor has punctuated the composition, and has in several places substituted capital letters for small letters, and in a much larger number of places has withdrawn Emily's capitals and replaced them with small letters. At this point of her career, writing a typical 'maid-servant's hand,' Emily was sublimely superior to all care for the difficulties of punctuation. She wrote her letters right away, from beginning to end, without using comma, semi-colon, colon, full stop, note of interrogation, or note of admiration. She declined to have anything to do with stops of any kind. In the use of capitals, Emily was also a typical maid-servant,—being clearly and steadily of opinion that a capital letter should never appear at the beginning of a sentence, and that the peculiar function of capital letters was to impart dignity to small and insignificant words. She was also of opinion that a capital letter was most effective for good, and was seen to the best advantage when planted in the middle of one of these comparatively unimportant words.

What I have done to this letter, I have done for all the letters of Lady Hamilton's writing, that will in due course appear in the present work. Whilst transcribing them, I have relieved them of the writer's

comical misuse of capital letters, and have punctuated them. I have also inserted *in angular* brackets obviously omitted letters and words, and now and then a brief explanatory note. But whilst doing this for the reader's convenience, I have for his advantage been at pains to reproduce the lady's bad spelling in every particular. It will not escape the reader of the ensuing pages that Lady Hamilton spelt her mother-tongue with different degrees of faultiness in the different stages of her career. In the periods of her worst spelling, she wrote 'whoman' for 'woman,' 'whent' for 'went,' and, on having occasion to write 'has,' usually omitted the letter 'h'; but, though she never spelt correctly, there were times of her life in which she spelt the words of her English letters with no greater incorrectness than was usual with women of the best fashion in George the Third's England. Had she passed all her time in England, she would doubtless have improved in this particular, till her hastiest scribblings would not have been remarkably defective in orthography. During her residence in Edgware Row, near Paddington Green (from the spring of 1782 to the spring of 1786), under Mr. Greville's sympathetic government, she improved steadily in her letter-writing, and towards the close of that term could throw off a letter with only a few orthographical slips. But during the first term of her residence in Italy, viz. from the spring of 1786 to the spring of 1791, she went backwards in her spelling. Whilst acquiring the Italian language with characteristic facility, she relapsed, so far as the English tongue was concerned, to the orthographical

slatternliness from which Mr. Greville had for the moment in some degree weaned her. On returning to England in 1800, after something more than fourteen years spent chiefly in Italy, she again improved in her English spelling.

On receiving Emily's pathetic letter, Mr. Greville at once sent her money for her travelling-expenses,—so much money, indeed, as would cover not only the bare charges of the journey, but would enable her to travel leisurely, and even to rest for some days on the way, should the state of her health require her to do so. It points to one of the girl's amiable qualities, and shows Mr. Greville was well aware of her free-handedness, that in sending her the liberal gift he cautioned her not to throw it away in presents, either to the friends who looked 'cooly' upon her, or to those of the Hawarden people who had shown her kindness. After getting back to town, she might send her dear old granny a goodly gift, and material expressions of good-will to others of her Flintshire acquaintance; but till she should be on the London pavement, she was enjoined to regard her money as money to be spent on herself, not given away to others. She had not written in vain to Mr. Greville, 'dow aford me some comfort.'

One of the pleasant and touching points of the girl's letter to Mr. Greville is the brief entreaty that he would not tell her mother of the distress she was in. Showing the girl's care for her mother's feelings, a care in which she was never deficient, and pointing to the mother's strong affection for her lovely child, the entreaty also indicates that, besides knowing Emily,

Mr. Greville was, at least in some degree, on friendly terms with her mother.

I am unable to give the date at which Mr. Greville made Emily's acquaintance. Possibly he knew her before she passed into Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh's keeping. Knowing Sir Harry, he certainly was intimate with her during her brief association with the Sussex baronet. Had they not been in one another's confidence during that term of her story, Mr. Greville would not have alluded to their intimacy at that time. Had she not given him serious cause of displeasure, he would not have reproved her gravely for having betrayed his confidence whilst she was under Sir Harry's protection, and have added, at a moment of increasing tenderness for her, that he would break his friendship with her immediately and for ever, on again discovering in her a want of loyalty and good faith. He said all this to her calmly, resolutely, most impressively, before he finally consented to provide her with a home. What confidence he had placed in her, of what grave betrayal of his confidence she had been guilty, I am unable to say.

In his papers on Lady Hamilton, published in the 'St. Stephen's Review,' between November 24, 1883, and July 12, 1884, a writer says: 'Her connection with Sir Harry Featherstonehaugh, of Up Park, Sussex, was, however, subsequent, and not prior to her connection with Charles Greville, as it is generally represented. She returned to the protection of Greville after an interval of "giddiness" at Up Park.' But in writing so, the 'St. Stephen's' reviewer clearly went beyond and against the evidence of the epistles he used for the production of his papers. There may

have been intimacy between Emily and Mr. Greville before she went into association with Sir Harry. They certainly had confidential relations before that association ended. But Emily was not regularly 'protected' by Mr. Greville at any time before 1782.

Mr. Greville was not the only man with whom Emily had secret confidences whilst Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh was her protector. When she conferred with Mr. Greville about her approaching accouchement, and inquired of him whether she had not better at once ask Sir Harry to make a suitable provision for the child who would soon be with her, he told her that she might speak to the baronet on the subject, but should be careful to avoid angry altercation with him on the delicate matter, as he might be informed of circumstances that would fully justify him in having doubts respecting the child's paternity. The counsel and the reminder are significant. In truth, Emily's confidential friendships during her intimacy with the 'Up Park' baronet were friendships that had better not be fully described. Though never a girl of the pavement, Emily had several confidential admirers in 1781, and during several months of that year had lived in a way to make Mr. Greville fearful that she would soon be upon the pavement. It was her wildest and giddiest time. This particular year was in her mind when, in December, 1791, soon after her marriage to Sir William Hamilton, she wrote with pathetic frankness and noble simplicity to her old friend Romney, the Painter: 'Oh, my dear Friend! for a time I own

through distress my virtue was vanquish'd; but my sense of virtue was not overcome.'

Restored to financial liberty, Amy lost no time in speaking words of civil farewell to the friends who had looked 'cooly' upon her. Together with her parting kiss to the babe, warm tears came to little Emily's blooming face. No doubt Amy kept the coach waiting a few seconds, that she might give her grandmother yet another parting embrace. This done, Amy mounted to the roof of the stage-coach, smiled from her perch at Mrs. Kidd, and then quickly turned her face in another direction, so that her rising tears should not trouble the good old soul, who had so often 'given her the last shilling.' This over, the Amy of Hawarden became the Emily of London,—at the outset of her long journey back to the great city.

At no long interval after her return to town, Mr. Greville visited her. Incapable of harshness to any woman, he spoke to her with tenderness and abundant sympathy, but with a certain grave resoluteness, which made her feel that in her dealings with him she must never again be wild and giddy, but be simple, natural, precisely truthful, and in every respect her best self. Whilst overflowing with gratitude to him, she felt slightly in awe of him, liking him all the more because she was afraid of displeasing him. Telling her at once to dismiss all causes of immediate anxiety, he assured her that he would under any circumstances see her through her approaching illness, and admired her enough to be wishful that she should determine to live with him. It did not escape her that he did not affect to love her, nor say

ought about love. She was not pained by the omission. For the present, it was enough of happiness for her to know that he admired her, would befriend her, would be good to her, and do his best to make her good.

Telling her frankly that, if they agreed to live together, they must not make the compact lightly, but have a clear and definite understanding with each other on several points before joining hands on the agreement, he stated precisely on what terms she might secure his protection. Though he was an earl's son, he was a comparatively poor man. He could not give her a carriage, nor a grand house, nor a large allowance of money for dress. He would be free-handed to her up to the limits of his modest means, and provide her with a home suitable to a woman of her extraordinary beauty, and fit in every respect for a gentlewoman married to a poor gentleman, making his way in the world,—the wife, say, of a member of one of the learned professions. But he could not afford to keep her in splendour and luxury. He wished to make her happy, and be happy with her, and see her become a good woman,—the good, self-respecting, well-educated woman she certainly might and would become, if she would give fair play to several excellent qualities, have done with giddiness and wildness, and, under his affectionate guidance, set to work resolutely on the serious business of her self-education. Saying he had watched her closely, and studied her mind and temper attentively, at moments when she was so giddy and wild as to think everyone about her as wild and giddy as her-

self, he told her that, extraordinarily beautiful though she was, Nature had been no less bountiful to her in mental than in personal respects, and, in spite of all the several facts making for a very different opinion, he believed that at heart she was as good and true as she was lovely and clever. It was a thousand pities that a girl who sung scraps of ballads so effectively, with a fine though untrained voice, should not be able to sing well; that a girl with her natural taste for music should be unable to play a musical instrument; that a girl who said such clever things should know nothing whatever of clever books; that a girl of her generous nature and essential goodness should run into extravagances of naughtiness. If she could lead a quiet, simple, domestic life with him, spending no more money than he could afford to give her, and spending her time and energies chiefly on her household duties and her own education, he should like to live with her, and should find extreme happiness in trying to make her happy. Of course, he added, with equal simplicity and significance, that he should not be doing his best to make her happy, unless he showed proper concern for the welfare of her child,—her children, should there be another a few weeks hence.

To show Emily that he was actuated by no parsimonious motive in what he said of the need for economy, he could have told her that, besides the £500 a year secured to him from the rental of his brother's estate, he had only a few thousands, whose interest barely sufficed to pay his parliamentary expenses, and meet the unforeseen charges of a gentle-

man moving in the best society. No doubt he had hope of 'a place' that would put him in easier circumstances, and stood high in the favour of a childless uncle, who would probably some day leave him a good estate in Pembrokeshire. But the mere hope would not pay tradesmen's bills, and the Pembrokeshire estate might at the last moment be left to his brother Robert. These particulars, however, were doubtless withheld from Emily at this point of her acquaintance with Mr. Charles Greville, though she knew all about them in later time. For the present, it was enough for him to tell her what he was ready to do for her advantage.

He retold her in frank and firm speech what he had already told her by pen. If she accepted his offer, she must do so on the understanding that no person whose acquaintance she had made under Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's roof, nor indeed any individual of her present London acquaintance, with the single exception of her mother, might cross the threshold of her new home. As for Mrs. Doggen, *alias* Cadogan, he should do his best to make her feel at home in her daughter's place of abode. At this point of a long conference, Mr. Greville was pleased to declare Mrs. Cadogan a most deserving woman, and to hope that Emily would persist in her dutiful affectionateness to so excellent a mother. Far from wishing Emily to see less, he wished her to see even more, of her mother. Indeed, he ventured to say that Emily's strong attachment to her mother was one of his chief reasons for thinking her at heart a really good girl, though a series of regrettable cir-

cumstances had rendered her for a while very much too giddy and wild. Dropping all her other London acquaintances, for none of whom she could have a strong regard, Emily must get quit of her present maid. It was, also, Mr. Greville's opinion that she had better assume a new name. That, however, was a point on which he should not insist.

As he went on, talking in this way, Emily thought how superior he was to all the other gentlemen she had known. He was so greatly unlike the noisy, hard-drinking, fast-riding gentlemen who were Sir Harry's boon companions. Valuing her chiefly for her saucy speeches, they seemed to think they did her honour in applauding her badinage. It had never occurred to any one of them that she might make herself better than she was. In their eyes, she was good for nothing better than what she had been. No doubt Mr. Greville had said some severe things, but they were all just things, and he somehow managed to say them in such a way that she could not be angry at them. Sir Harry's friends had flattered her sky-high. But it was pleasanter to her to listen to Mr. Greville, saying that she needed a great deal of improvement. In fact, she felt that Mr. Greville was fit to be her master, would be a good and kind ruler over her, and had appeared just in time to save her from sliding into darker wickedness and early death. For months she had felt that the strong arm of a kind man could alone save her from unnameable evil and the sharpest punishment of sin; and now this good Mr. Greville had come to be her earthly saviour.

She could have kissed his feet, and wept on them

for gratitude. She was on the point of kneeling at them, as she accepted his gracious terms. But, seeing her purpose, he prevented her, by saying, 'No, no, Emily, you must do nothing impulsively in this matter. It is a serious business. You may not accept my terms till you have had time to think them over. We must talk over this bargain several times, before we strike it.'

A day or two later, however, the bargain was struck; both parties entering into the arrangement with a solemn, mutual promise that, whether their association should be for a short or a long time, they would in all things be, to the best of their respective abilities, precisely truthful to and invariably considerate for one another.

At the present time, few decent London suburbs possess an unlovelier spot than the locality where Mr. Greville found a bower of rural quietude and romantic seclusion for himself and Emily. But in the earlier decades of George the Third's reign, Oxford Street may be almost said to have smelt the violets growing in the adjacent country. Wild flowers were still plucked within a hundred yards of Marylebone Road. Dotted by a few villas, St. John's Wood still deserved its sylvan name. The terraces of Maida Hill and the stucco mansions of Maida Vale were yet to be built. Kilburn was in the green fields, and Tyburnia in the holding of dairy-farmers. Swept now-a-days by the scavengers, Paddington Green in the time of Farmer George was swept by nothing more material than the frolicsome breezes. A place of verdant sward and leafy trees, it still looked much

such a village common as it had been in the seventeenth century, save that it had an ugly brick church in the midst of its expanse, and was skirted by a few mansions standing in separate gardens, and a block or two of roomy Georgian houses, entered by stately doors, each of which had a distinctive and more or less grotesque knocker.

Taking a small house in Edgware Row, hard by, and maybe within, the boundaries of this pleasant green, Mr. Greville furnished it in accordance with the best taste of his period, and beautified its rooms with works of art, which he had for some years been collecting with artistic discretion and financial prudence. To visit this house, at any time of its tenancy by Mr. Greville, was to see he was a connoisseur. Together with fine examples of the Dutch school, the collector's choicest treasures comprised a few works by the best English painters. In the drawing-room, where Emily Hart's first piano lingered, after she practised her five notes and other preliminary exercises upon it, there was a portrait of Emily Bertie, in the character of Thais, painted by Sir Joshua Reynolds *for* Mr. Greville, and retouched in certain points by the famous artist before it left the easel, to put it altogether in harmony with the young connoisseur's conceptions of the beautiful and true. In this *salon* might also be seen folios of rare engravings and unsurpassably fine mezzo-tints, bits of sculpture in marble and bronze, the cabinet of antique coins which Mr. Greville had brought together with infinite trouble and pleasure, and the fine collection of mineralogical specimens, which showed that the gentleman,

who was very much of a connoisseur, was also something of a *savant*.

Of this fashion was the home to which Mr. Greville brought Emily Hart in the spring of 1782. On coming to this pleasant abode, Emily, whilst retaining the surname by which she is known to this day almost as generally as by Hamilton, assumed the Christian name of Emma. Delighted with her new home at the first sight of it, the girl soon grew to love it.

Mr. Greville also conceived a strong affection for the cottage and the adjacent green. Some two-and-a-half years after parting with Emma, in a way for which he must be judged hardly, notwithstanding his beneficence and salutary service to the lovely girl, whom he may in one sense be said to have rescued from ruin, the connoisseur and man of fashion moved from Emma's home in Edgware Row to a larger house, without retreating from the locality to which he was attached by tender memories of his discarded mistress. I have failed to identify either the exact house where he entertained Emma, or the Row in which it stood. Perhaps both the tenement and the row have passed away. But Mr. Greville's larger house on Paddington Green—a house at the Green's north-east corner—still stands, and is known to its neighbours as Greville House.

On his appointment to the office of Vice-Chamberlain, he could well have afforded to place his hearth and household gods in a courtlier and costlier quarter. But no spot of western London was so charming to him as the suburban green, under whose

trees he and Emma used to sit and saunter during their brief union. In his mellowing age, when he had succeeded to his uncle's Welsh estate and become a wealthy man, he lived there, whenever he was in town. The house at the Green's north-east corner was the house where he yielded his last breath in 1809, when he was just sixty years of age. Never marrying, he left behind him no children, of whom the heralds take cognizance. And I doubt not that, as health, and hope, and old friends passed from him, he often bitterly regretted that he did not hold as tenaciously to Emma as she would fain have clung to him.

CHAPTER V.

EMMA'S HOME WITH MR. GREVILLE.

The Hon. Charles Greville's Lineage—His Uncle, Sir William Hamilton—Intercourse of the Uncle and Nephew—Emma's Life at Paddington Green—Her Personal and Domestic Expenses—Her Mother—Strong Testimony to Mrs. Cadogan's Merit—Emma's Children—Her Intercourse with Romney—Scandalous Inventions—Miserable Slanders—Allan Cunningham's Statement to Lady Hamilton's Discredit—Duration of Emma's Association with Mr. Greville—His Way of Educating Her—How He Governed Her—Her Progress under the Discipline—Mr. Greville's Testimony to her Goodness—Vehemence of her Admiration and Love of Him—Ranelagh Gardens—Emma Sings in Public—Mr. Greville's Displeasure—Emma's Contrition—Did He Love Her?

1782—1786 A.D.

BORN on the 12th of May, 1749, the Honourable Charles Francis Greville was the 2nd son of Francis, 8th Baron Brooke, and 1st Earl of Warwick (of the Greville family), who died on the 6th of July, 1773, —about eight-and-a-half years before his son Charles took Emma Hart under his protection. It is scarcely needful to remind my readers that, at the close of the eighteenth century, the Grevilles, in so many cases bearing the Christian name of Fulke, had for generations shone brightly in letters and arms. The 1st

Lord Brooke was that Sir Fulke Greville, who, after winning distinction in literature, at court, and by high official services, raised for his own commemoration in the great church of Warwick, the monument, whose inscription proclaimed him to have been the servant of Queen Elizabeth, a counsellor to King James, and the friend of Sir Philip Sidney.

Thus descended in the male line, the Honourable Charles Francis Greville had a still brighter and more impressive genealogy through his mother, Jane Hamilton, daughter of Lord Archibald Hamilton, of Riccartoun and Pardovan, co. Linlithgow, and of Castle Confey, co. Kildare, Governor of Greenwich Hospital and Governor of Jamaica, by Lady Jane Hamilton, a daughter of James, 6th Earl of Abercorn. A younger son of William, 3rd Duke of Hamilton, Lord Archibald Hamilton had, besides Lady Brooke (Countess of Warwick), five children—one of whom was Sir William Hamilton, K.B. (George the Third's foster-brother), the famous connoisseur and archæologist, who represented His Britannic Majesty for thirty-six years at the Court of Naples. Thus, whilst inheriting from his mother the blood of both the great houses of Hamilton, the Honourable Charles Greville had for his uncle the brilliant and celebrated Sir William Hamilton.

Of Sir William Hamilton a good deal will be said in subsequent pages of this work. In the present chapter it will be enough to glance at his relation to his nephew, Mr. Charles Greville. Strongly attached from his boyhood to his sister, who by her marriage with Lord Brooke became Countess of Warwick, Sir

William Hamilton selected her son Charles for his favourite nephew. Resembling his celebrated uncle in taste, address, and ways of thought, though considerably inferior to him in intellect and force of character, Mr. Greville was a nephew of whom Sir William had reason to be proud, and for whom it was natural for him to cherish a strong affection. On losing his daughter and only child in 1775, Sir William determined that his nephew Charles, at that time just upon twenty-six years of age, should be his heir, and, having for years regarded him with approval, henceforth honoured him with his fullest confidence. The intercourse of the uncle and nephew was peculiar, differing in several respects from the ordinary friendship of an uncle and nephew. Passing most of his time in the foreign (and—in pre-railway time—distant) land, to which he was tied by official duty, Sir William Hamilton required a particular friend to look after his interests in England. The connoisseur at Naples, ever collecting ‘for the pot’ whilst zealous from the highest motives for the cause of artistic exploration and research, needed the services of a devoted agent to do business for him with the London dealers and the London *dilettanti*. Having, by his marriage with a Welsh heiress, acquired in Pembrokeshire a considerable landed estate that needed judicious development, Sir William required for that purpose the services of a man of affairs on whom he could rely more fully than an absentee landlord ought to rely on a mere land-steward. In Italy, Sir William Hamilton felt the need of a friend, moving in the best circles of London society, and having the

confidence of the most knowing people of those circles, who by a steady stream of London letters should keep him well-informed of all that was going on at Windsor and Westminster, in the cliques of the Court and the social coteries of the town.

The Honourable Charles Greville was all that his uncle needed in these several respects. An admirable man of business, he knew how to manage the Welsh estate, and kept a suspicious eye on the land-steward, whilst seeming to have perfect confidence in him. In the studios of the artists, the homes of the *dilettanti*, and the shops of the art-dealers he made good bargains with an elegant politeness, that caused even the dealers to think him incapable of driving a bargain. Strictly honourable in all his pecuniary dealings, he never over-reached or haggled with any man; but whilst fair in every matter of business, he was no less sagacious and firm, and in days when it was generally deemed beneath the dignity of a gentleman to have a proper care for his commercial interests, showed it was possible for an earl's son to be at the same time a person of the highest breeding and a skilful manager of small affairs. At Westminster, he had what was more serviceable to his uncle than direct influence in debate,—he had the confidence of every-one, the ear of powerful members, though scarcely the ‘ear of the house,’ and the good opinion of ministers. Having the manners, which even yet cause Lord Chesterfield to be gratefully remembered, a vein of pleasant humour, a tongue that often gave amusement but never gave pain, he was no less acceptable to women

than to men, and was a welcome guest in the best houses of London society,—at a time when English ‘society’ (in inverted commas) consisted of some two thousand of the flower of the English aristocracy, and the few hundreds of delightful men and women from the ranks, whom the aristocrats by birth had the good sense and essential liberality to treat as—their equals, by virtue and force of their various natural endowments. Mr. Greville’s letters could be produced in evidence, to show how well Sir William at Naples was kept *au courant* with the tattle and interests of Mayfair by his nephew.

In imagining the intercourse of the uncle and nephew, readers may not suppose it resembled in any way the intercourse of Major Pendennis and his nephew Arthur. Wholly wanting in the formality, that usually characterizes the social intercommunication of an uncle and nephew, it was as far as possible the intercourse of two kinsmen of the same generation and nearly the same age. Whilst it was Sir William’s humour to live on terms of perfect equality with his nephew, Mr. Greville did his best to forget how much he was his uncle’s junior. Never addressing Mr. Greville as his dear nephew, Sir William would have been surprised and hurt, had his nephew addressed him as ‘dear uncle,’ either in a letter or at a dinner-table. In their letters and talk to one another, they were ‘dear Hamilton’ and ‘dear Greville.’ Sometimes Mr. Greville was his uncle’s ‘dear Charles,’ but never his ‘dear nephew.’ It was the easier and less remarkable for them to associate in this way with one another, because, whilst Mr. Greville was rather

old for his years, Sir William was in spirit, temper, style, and appearance, singularly young for his age. By the calendar Sir William was not full twenty years older than his nephew, and he disliked whatever reminded him that the difference of their ages was so great. On first seeing Sir William, Emma thought him quite an old gentleman; but pluming himself on his youthfulness, Sir William imagined he looked quite as young as his nephew.

On realizing Emma's life at Edgware Row, Paddington Green, readers will smile at Pettigrew for speaking of its 'splendid misery.' There was not much of splendour in her home, nor much of misery in her life, though she had her moments of depression, when Mr. Greville had reproved her for a display of temper, or had been absent from the house for several days at a time.

As I have failed to identify Emma's home in Edgware Row with any of the houses still standing on the marge of Paddington Green, my account of its interior cannot be perfect in all its details. But the character and appointments of the somewhat larger house, into which Mr. Greville moved in August, 1788, afford reliable data for a general description of the smaller tenement, in which he sheltered his *protégée*; as there is abundant evidence that the connoisseur displayed in Greville House the same taste that had imparted a peculiar charm of artistic distinctiveness to his earlier home in the same locality, and that the most striking *objets d'art* of the later residence were for the most part the same paintings and pieces of sculpture, that had adorned his rooms in Edgware Row.

On crossing the threshold of the eleven-roomed house, in which Mr. Greville died, the visitor found himself in a fairly ample and dark wainscotted hall, and at the foot of a handsome staircase, whose balustrade was of carved oak, from the hall to the top (*i.e.*, second-floor) storey of the mansion. On looking up this staircase, he saw that, like the carved balustrade, the pannelling went to the top of the house, and that the dark wood was relieved by portraits and other paintings. Without the pictures, the staircase would not have been gloomy, for it was provided with windows, admitting an abundance of light. Whilst the front of the house looked out upon the turf and umbrageous trees of the Green, the backward windows of the abode afforded a view of a pleasant and well-kept, but small, garden. Without being impressively large, the rooms were sufficiently ample; and though it betrayed the taste of the connoisseur, their furniture was wholly devoid of splendour. Permeated by an air of refinement and not wholly wanting in unobtrusive stateliness, the house—perhaps the best house on the Green—was everything that a dwelling of its kind should be; and it would have been other than what so modest a mansion should be, had any attempt been made to invest it with splendour. Though no less expressive of culture and gentility, Emma's somewhat smaller home in Edgware Row was even more wanting than Greville House in the kind of grandeur, that might be termed splendid. Looking upon the same breadths of green sward, both houses in the summer-time heard the rustling of the same trees.

Apart from Mr. Greville's personal expenses, rent, rates, and repairs, every item of the charges of her Edgware Row house was entered by Emma in her account-books; and from what remains to us of her weekly accounts, one can state, with almost comical preciseness, in what style and at what cost the orderly house was kept. Though she dressed like a gentlewoman, and had some of her costumes from a good dressmaker (Mrs. Hackwood, who continued to make dresses for her when she had become a personage at Naples), she found an allowance of £20 a-year sufficient for her clothes and pocket-money, though she often gave a trifle to a poor body in the street. The servants under her benign government were two maids,—a girl to whom she paid £9 a-year, and another girl who had wages of £8 a-year, the ordinary wages of London maid-servants in the time of George the Third. She had, indeed, during the greater part of each year another and most efficient servant, in the person of her mother, whom she loved so tenderly, and treated so reverentially. Wherever the active, sensible, and respectable Mrs. Cadogan* lived under

* This worthy creature seems to have resembled her daughter in changing her name, from motives less urgent than necessity. Mary Kidd by birth, she became Mary Lion *alias* Lyon by marriage. After losing her husband, she was known in different stages of her career as Mary Doggen, Mary Doggin, and Mary Cadogan. In the destroyed will which Lady Hamilton dated at Merton on the 7th October, 1806, the testator says, 'I give to my dear mother, formerly Mary Kidd, then Lions, and after Mary Doggen, or Cadogan.' In a destroyed will of later date (the will dated at Richmond on the 16th October, 1808), Lady Hamilton says, 'I also give all that I am possessed of in this world to my dear mother, Mary Doggin, or Cadogan, and after her death to my dear Horatia Nelson.'

her daughter's shelter, she insisted on being a busy member of the household. At Paddington Green, Mrs. Cadogan, a capital cook, was chiefly accountable for Mr. Greville's satisfaction with the dinners put upon his table. At Naples, she was her daughter's housekeeper, whilst never for a single minute aught less than her child's honoured mother. Notwithstanding Mrs. Richard Trench's disdainful tattle to the poor woman's discredit, Mrs. Cadogan must have resembled Dame Kidd, in being a sterling good creature, for she earned the good opinion successively of the Hon. Mr. Greville, Sir William Hamilton, and Lord Nelson. The great admiral often sent her friendly words from distant seas, and more than once begged Lady Hamilton to give her a handsome present *from him*. Sir William Hamilton held her in high esteem, and bequeathed her a contingent legacy of £100 a-year for her life. Mr. Greville often spoke of her in terms of praise. The testimony of Mr. Greville, Sir William Hamilton, and Nelson to Mrs. Cadogan's worth will, with most readers, be more influential than Mrs. Trench's reflections on the worthy woman's want of fashionable style and conventional refinement.

In every particular, Emma's home at Paddington Green was maintained like the home of a gentlewoman, who, without being poor, needed to be mindful of small daily expenses. The table, though in some respects frugal, perhaps somewhat sparing and meagre in Mr. Greville's absence, was sufficient. The cooking, thanks to clever Mrs. Cadogan, was excellent. Endowed at this period no less than in later

time with a good appetite, Emma ate heartily, but was moderate and strictly temperate in drink; her usual strong drink being small ale, and her daily allowance of it being a single glassful.

Mr. Greville's heaviest expenses for his *protégée* were the expenses of her education, which included the payment of a sufficient piano-master, and the larger payment for a superior singing-master; and the charges he was at for the maintenance of her child. As one hears nothing of the baby she was expecting, when she was turned off by Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh, it may be assumed that either her illness passed without giving her another child, or that the baronet took the infant off her hands.

Speaking with obvious distrust of the report, and (according to his wont, whenever he says aught on what he feels to be unreliable authority) intimating to his readers that they should regard the statement suspiciously, Pettigrew says, 'By her connexion with Mr. Greville, she is reported to have had three children, named Eliza, Ann, and Charles. She always passed for their aunt, and took upon herself the name of Harte.' I have grounds for a strong opinion that she never had a child by Mr. Greville. In the scores of letters in my possession, that were written by her to Mr. Greville, between January 1782 and the close of 1805, there is no passage, either countenancing the statement, or raising even the faintest suspicion, that he was the father of offspring by her. Writing freely to him about her first child, who certainly was not his child; about her health and illnesses; about half-a-hundred matters of interest to him and herself, she

never alludes to any child of which he was the father, nor hints that their association had been or might be fruitful of issue. Yet more, at a memorable point of her story—a time following quickly on her migration from London to Naples—she wrote certain remarkable letters, in which she could not have failed to strengthen her appeal to his better nature by speaking of their offspring, had there been any to speak of. Yet in these letters she did not even hint that he either was or had been the father of a child by her.

I am, however, disposed to think that she was the mother of *three* children. She certainly gave birth to two children,—‘little Emily’ and Horatia. Probably she was also the mother of a child born in an early month of 1782, and provided for by Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh. She expected to have a second child at that time, and, apart from her silence about the child, there is no ground for thinking the expectation was not fulfilled. If the baronet relieved her of all responsibility for the child’s nurture, his action would account for her silence about it in the letters to Greville, that say so much of little Emily *alias* Emma. The birth of a child at that time would, if Sir Harry adopted it, and lived to take a fatherly interest in it, account for the consideration and respectfulness with which he wrote to Lady Hamilton in his later time. The report, referred to by Pettigrew, may have been an inference from some confidential confession, made by the lady herself, that she was the mother of three children.

In a home that was maintained at a cost of about £300 a-year, Emma lived with much happiness and

great advantage to herself at Paddington Green. The misery, which Pettigrew imagined her to have endured there, was as fictitious as the splendour he ascribed to her way of living. It was upon the whole the happiest time of her whole career. Soon after entering the pleasant abode, she was taken by Mr. Greville to Cavendish Square, and introduced to Romney, who in the course of years painted no less than twenty-four, and probably as many as twenty-five, portraits of her. The twenty-four are mentioned in John Romney's 'Life' of his celebrated father,—a work produced for the correction of Hayley's history of his familiar friend, which caused the painter's kindred both pain and indignation. She was also the original of Sir Joshua's celebrated 'Bacchante'; and she sate to Hoppner, and Lawrence, to say nothing of the scores of painters and sculptors who reproduced her beauties, on canvas, in marble or on cameos, during her long residence in Italy.

It has long been the fashion of a certain sort of writers to refer lightly to Lady Hamilton as a person who was in her early time an artist's model, the words being so used as to imply that she was a professional model, and was therefore a wanton girl. Wholly untrue, in its use of a term, to the facts of Lady Hamilton's story, the statement is, by its implication, repulsively unjust to the many good girls who are or have been professional models, without the slightest impairment of their feminine delicacy.

Few women have suffered more from slander than Nelson's Lady Hamilton; and it is doubtful whether she suffered more in her reputation through the

caitiffs, who slandered her intentionally, than from scribes who calumniated through mere levity and carelessness. In biting type, she has been designated the servant, the model, the mistress of Romney, as though to prove her any one of the characters were to demonstrate her to have been all three. Even worse has been said of her. It has been averred that she sold the view of her personal beauties to artists, in order that they should turn their opportunity to the vilest account. Strange to say, this barbarous misrepresentation of her doings with the greatest painters of her time was popularized by a writer whose worth and respectability have made it pass current as sure and authoritative history. - In his Memoir of Romney (*vide*, 'The Most Eminent British Painters, Sculptors and Architects,' *John Murray*), Allan Cunningham says, 'This fascinating dame was that Emma Lyon, destined in a future day, as Lady Hamilton, to exercise such injurious influence over the illustrious Nelson. Her personal loveliness was wonderful; *and in her youth she took her beauty freely to the market of art*,—exposing her charms without reserve, and so lavishly that they found their way into most pictures of that period. Princes and Peers contended for copies of her shape and looks, *in many attitudes*, and many various characters, *till the lines of Pope were more than realised*:—

“How many pictures of one nymph we view,
All how unlike each other—all how true!
Arcadia's Countess here in ermined pride,
Is there Pastora by a fountain's side;
Here, Fannia leering on her own good man,
And there, a naked Leda with a swan.”

This atrocious statement (penned by a writer who meant to tell only the truth, and published by a bookseller of the highest respectability) that Lady Hamilton carried her charms into the *market of art*, was sketched in many *attitudes*, and was painted as something even more voluptuous than *a naked Leda with a swan* is untrue from beginning to end,—hideously untrue in its concluding suggestion.

Lady Hamilton never at any time of her life carried her beauty to the market of art. Pettigrew was under the impression that she had been a professional model, and was maintaining herself honestly by that vocation, when she made the acquaintance of Mr. Greville. ‘During the period alluded to,’ he says, ‘in which she was supporting herself by turning to advantage, for the maintenance of life, that beauty of form with which nature endowed her, she formed an acquaintance with an honourable member of the House of Warwick, Mr. Charles Greville, who saw her, and was immediately enamoured of her.’ But in this Dr. Pettigrew was greatly mistaken. Introduced to Romney’s studio by a man who (strange though it may seem to some readers of her story) was at that time the realization of her highest ideal of human goodness, she sat repeatedly to the famous painter, not because she was paid to do so, but because, in the first instance, she was assured by her benefactor that she would render Art high service by inspiring the artist with finer conceptions of loveliness, and afterwards, because, in her simple gratitude to every-one who was kind to her, she conceived an innocent attachment to the painter, who, offering

her homage that was at the same time idolatrous and paternal, worshipt her and spoke of her reverentially as 'his divine lady.' Romney would as soon have thought of striking her in the face as of proffering her money for such beneficence. No doubt, during their long and stainless intercourse, he ventured to give her things of art. But even to Mrs. Cadogan, humble person though she was in her appearance, he did not presume to offer any material expression of his gratitude, less meet for a gentlewoman's acceptance, than a picture of her lovely child,—a picture he thought the most beautiful of all his heads, painted from the same divine original.

Of all the pictures Romney made of her, the only one which the most austere critic would venture to declare tainted with immodesty and voluptuous suggestion, is the Bacchante leading a goat. But of this picture, as the able Blackwood essayist observes truly, 'the face alone was painted from Lady Hamilton.' The Reverend John Romney gives evidence to the same effect, in the passage of his father's 'Life,' that speaks of the artist's intercourse with his 'divine lady.' 'In all Mr. Romney's intercourse with her,' says this biographer, 'she was treated with the utmost respect, and her demeanour fully entitled her to it. In the characters in which she has been represented, she sate only for the face and a slight sketch of the attitude; and the drapery was painted either from other models or from the layman. The only figure that displayed any licentiousness of dress was the Bacchante; and it was as modest as the nature of the character would admit of; but in this

she only sat for the face.' How absolutely devoid of indecency were 'the Attitudes,' to which Allan Cunningham seems to allude without having seen them, readers have already been told. The notion that Emma Hamilton ever offered herself to painters as a nude study is preposterous. Even in Italy, at a crisis of her career when she was especially set on doing everything in her power to please Sir William Hamilton, and had good reason to fear her resolute refusal would offend him, she had the courage—shall I be derided for calling it the *virtue*?—to write to him that she would not consent to be painted with so open a dress, as he wished to see her wear in the picture then on the easel.

By those who would know this strongly interesting and barbarously misrepresented woman (and high interests require that she should be known, precisely as she was, with all her noble endowments and lamentable imperfections), it should be realized that, though in her ignorant, unwise, sorely-tempted youth her 'virtue was vanquish'd' (her own confession to Romney!), she never lost her sense of decency. That women may endure this defeat, without suffering this particular loss, is well known to the many good people who have laboured long and wisely for the advantage of those broken and wandering outcasts, whom society at large regards alternately with gushing sentimentalism and callous cruelty.

Considerable misapprehension exists respecting the duration of Emma's domestic association with Mr. Greville. Pettigrew thought that she lived with Sir William Hamilton's nephew till 1789, and in that

year went to Italy for the first time. Stating correctly the year in which the association commenced, the Blackwood essayist adopted Pettigrew's error as to the year in which the association came to an end. 'She,' says the essayist, 'resided with him for six or seven years;' and in a later paragraph of his article he says, 'From 1782 to 1789 Emma Harte continued to reside under the protection of Mr. Greville.' But, instead of living with Mr. Greville for six or seven years, she lived with him for barely four years. The actual association cannot be said to have begun till Emma had recovered from the accouchement, that took place in an early month of 1782, and in the March of 1786 she started for Naples, at which capital she arrived on the 26th of April, 1786, the anniversary of her birthday, when, according to my computation, she was exactly twenty-three years of age, though both Mr. Greville and Sir William Hamilton conceived her to be something younger.

She sate several times to Romney in the summer and autumn of 1791, when she was in England shortly before and after her marriage in Marylebone Church; but as she was very much in society, paid several country visits, and was distracted by multifarious engagements during this stay in England, she did not pay Romney so many visits in this year as some writers have inferred from the memorable results of the sittings she did give him. After returning to Italy, she never again saw the great Painter, who was fast sinking into the darkness of the utter fatuity in which his days closed, when he was informed of his 'divine lady's' re-appearance in Eng-

land, and of her strong desire to see him. 'The pleasure,' the stricken man wrote to Hayley, from his retirement at Kendal, on the 13th of December, 1800, 'I should receive from a sight of the amiable Lady Hamilton would be as salutary as great; yet I fear, except I should enjoy more health and better spirits, I shall never be able to see London again. I feel every day greater need of care and attention; and here I experience them in the highest degree.' Already he was on the verge of the gloomy term of utter imbecility, that closed in death on the 15th of November, 1802.

It follows that of the large number of likenesses taken of Lady Hamilton by Romney, the majority were from sittings she gave him in something less than four years—a fact to be borne in mind by those who would realize the course and conditions of Emma's life at Paddington Green. During those four years she was continually tripping to and fro, between the Edgware Row and Cavendish Square, with her hand on Mr. Greville's arm, or arm-in-arm with her mother. In his 'Memoir' of his famous father, the Reverend John Romney says that during her residence at Paddington, Emma used to visit the painter once or twice a week. 'From the peculiarity of her situation,' says the biographer, 'she was excluded from society, justly excluded; and the only resources she had for amusement in her loneliness were reading and music at home, and coming once or twice a week to sit for her picture. She always had a hackney-coach to bring and take her away; and she never appeared in the streets without her

mother,'—words that are not to be read with severe literalness. Emma sometimes walked to and fro between her own home and the painter's house. Doubtless the biographer merely wished to imply that she always had a hackney-coach when she needed a carriage, and never appeared in the public ways without her mother *or* Mr. Greville. Visiting him thus often in Cavendish Square, Emma also saw Romney from time to time in her own house, he being one of the few persons out of all his many friends whom Mr. Greville was ever glad to see at the pleasant meetings in Edgware Row.

Here is the whole story of Emma's intimacy with the great painter, which, begun though it was, not only with Mr. Greville's sanction, but at his instance, and maintained, though it was, at every point of the four years with his approval, has been so fruitful of gross insinuations against the young and lovely woman, who, by the confidence she reposed in the artist, not only made him in the most innocent and interesting way greatly her debtor, but rendered Art a long series of services, for which all lovers of Art have reason to remember her with gratitude and honour.

Romney's friendship for Emma, and his paternal intimacy with her, were no insignificant part of the education that qualified her to become the wife of Sir William Hamilton. And, whilst they were affecting her so beneficially, her education in other respects made satisfactory progress. She certainly was fortunate in falling into the hands of so sympathetic and discreet a tutor as Mr. Greville, who was set on

training her to womanly goodness by the culture and development of her æsthetic endowments. Instead of bothering her with spelling-books and copy-books, he wisely regarded the bad spelling as something to be amended by degrees, and the slatternly writing as something that would gradually and imperceptibly relinquish its slatternliness. It seemed to him it would be better for her to spell and write badly to the end of her days than to acquire a good handwriting and faultless orthography by a tedious course of drilling, that would vex her temper and indispose her for intellectual pursuits of a far higher kind. So he gave her a piano, and the means of learning how to play upon it; and put her under a good singing-master, who soon discovered that, with steady training, her powerful voice would become a noble organ. As for letters,—encouraging her to read poetry and wholesome novels, he gossipped with her about the current numbers of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, knowing that she would learn to spell by conning the words of the literature that interested her. At the same time, he taught her to take an intelligent interest in things of which she never heard till she came to live with him,—such things, for instance, as his ancient coins, choice engravings and mezzo-tints, and his mineralogical specimens.

Seeing that she was a proud, and at the same time a vain, girl,—a creature whose love of approbation was inordinate, whilst her fine sensitiveness and gratitude for small kindnesses were so alert as to be almost pathetic to the student of her nature,—he governed her by playing on these qualities. Bearing himself

to her at all times, when they were together, not as a gentleman showing kindness to a social inferior, but as a gentleman living on terms of the closest intimacy with a woman who was his social equal, he stimulated her pride to become what he affected to think her. Sometimes neglectful of her (possibly with design and for a purpose) when he was away from her,—for instance, allowing weeks at a time to pass without writing to her, when he was staying in country-houses, and she was in lodgings at a watering-place,—he was always thoughtful for her feelings when they were under the same roof, and habitually offered her the small courtesies and delicate flatteries that contribute so largely to the daily contentment of girls in her position and of her nature. Never lavish of money to her (she knew he was not in a position to be so!), he was continually bringing home to her trifling gifts, a ribbon or a toy bought for a few pence, that never failed to delight her, because they showed her she had been in his mind, as he sauntered through the town. Ever overflowing with what she called his ‘goodness to her,’ he was firm, but never for an instant harsh to her, even when her quick temper caused her to rise in momentary mutiny against his will. The ‘scoldings,’ as Emma calls them, that he gave her, were no vehement outbreaks of displeasure, though they were fearful punishments to the girl, who had fallen completely under his sway. When he told her gravely, that she really almost made him ashamed of her, Emma was sorely troubled. When he went a step further, as he did at least on one occasion, and told her calmly that she had humiliated

him, and filled him with shame for himself, Emma wished the earth to open and close upon her.

Under this discipline, Emma, far from living in misery, was about as joyous, blithe-hearted, *riante* a girl as could have been found in all London. She was, also, apart from the fascinations of her incomparable personal beauty, a charming companion. Overflowing with piquant raillery—a badinage made up of racy chatter about small things, and wholly amiable mimicry of her mother, Mr. Greville, Romney, her servants, even of herself—she could, and often *did*, keep a roomful in laughter for the hour together, without telling a story that jarred on Mr. Greville's fastidious taste, or uttering a single word he would rather have had her not say. And allowance, *large* allowance being made for facts heretofore stated to her disadvantage, I venture to say, that she was, in the main, a good girl. On ceasing to live with her, Mr. Greville averred that she was absolutely free from all the usual failings of young women of her degree and peculiar position; that, throughout their long association, she had never displayed an inclination to make an acquaintance he would have disliked her to make; had never been guilty of falsehood or equivocation, or any kind of deceit or meanness to him; had never asked or hinted a desire for pleasure he could not afford to give her; had never shown—even in her wildest moments and sauciest moods—the slightest inclination to irreverence, and, though often revealing a lack of purely conventional politeness, had never—even in her most unguarded moments—shown a want of native refinement, or of

natural feminine delicacy. Of the generosity of her impulses, her precise honesty in pecuniary matters, her proud punctiliousness on all questions touching her own interests, and the charitableness of her disposition towards all people, Mr. Greville spoke in the highest terms. And, in saying all this to her honour, Mr. Greville was certainly no more than just to her.

In these Paddington Green days, Emma the Joyous was sometimes troubled by thinking of the terms on which she was living with her 'dear Greville,' as she always addressed him in her letters of that period, after learning how to spell his name. It troubled her, now and again, for a few minutes at a time, to reflect that, much though he seemed in his quiet way to delight in her society, and great though his goodness was to her, she was only a person whom he was competent to dismiss at any moment as peremptorily as she had been dismissed by Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh. A turn of fortune's wheel might at any moment put her in a plight in some respects similar to the condition from which her good Mr. Greville had rescued her. Not that she had terrifying anticipations for her own and her mother's future, now that she had been found to have a good voice, and was going onward so well in her singing. If the worst came to the worst, she could earn her own and her mother's living, with what her singing-master called 'her noble organ.' Not that she conceived so kind a man as Mr. Greville would ever be less than just and merciful to her. But he was an Earl's son, and should Sir William die, and leave him the estate in Wales, he might think it due to himself to marry an

Earl's daughter. What then? Ah, what then?—for this Emma loved wholly, and utterly, and passionately this great Mr. Greville, who had been and still was so good to her.

She never for a moment seems to have reflected on the wrongness of her way of living with her 'dear Mr. Greville.' It never seems to have occurred to her that the way was blameworthy. How should she think so of the way, since he lived in it with her, and was her ideal of goodness. It may cause readers to smile sadly; but the fact stands out clear on the record, that to Emma in her simplicity (for she was a simple creature!) Mr. Greville seemed an incomparably noble, a divinely good man. The critical reader may for the moment be doubtful on this point; but he will cease to be so, on reading certain of Emma's letters, that will be soon submitted to his consideration. No romantic young wife ever prayed and strove more earnestly to grow worthy of her idolized husband, than Emma strove and yearned to be *worthy* of Mr. Greville.

Whilst her life went thus differently from the lives of most young women of her particular social kind, Emma seldom went into scenes of gaiety. Mr. Greville seldom took her to the theatre, partly because he was constrained to be economical with his half-crowns, but chiefly because he saw the excitements of the playhouse might somewhat too soon inspire a young woman of her emotional nature and dramatic genius, with an ambition to figure triumphantly on the 'business-side' of the footlights. But one evening, to give her a great treat, he carried her off to

Ranelagh Gardens, to see the multitudinous lights and gay company, and to listen to the singing. The result of this visit to Ranelagh should be borne in mind by those who would understand the doings of Lady Hamilton in later time. Animated by the brightness of the scene, the murmurous agitations of the people who thronged the Gardens, Emma was in an ecstasy of delight, before she came to the spot where the Prima Donna's voice was audible. But then Emma's violent delight passed into delicious madness. The long applause, that acknowledged the merits of the First Lady's vocal achievement, had scarcely ceased, when Emma, without a thought for the impropriety of her conduct, burst into song,—trilling forth her favourite and the best of all the songs, that had been taught her by her singing-master. For a few moments, the people about her regarded her with surprise and disapproval. It was too late for Mr. Greville to interfere effectually, without rendering the affair more embarrassing to himself, and absolutely cruel to her. A minute later the silence of admiration held the multitudinous throng of listeners, whilst like the utterances of a skylark in rapture, Emma's strong, pure, rich notes floated higher yet and higher. No music of the evening had won such applause, as the deafening acclamations that followed on the song. They were not at an end, when Mr. Greville, seizing his opportunity, carried the songstress off, and hastening with her out of the Gardens put her in the nearest coach, and attended her to their home.

The poor girl got no thanks from the one auditor,

whose applause would have been sweeter to her than the praises of ten thousand acclaimants of 'encore.' Her fiercer excitement having subsided when she recrossed the threshold, Mr. Greville gave her one of those rare 'scoldings,' that were so inexpressibly afflicting to her. He told her he was ashamed of her, and that she had filled him with shame for himself.

Dropping her eye-lids, whose long lashes were beaded with glistening tears, straightening the lips that curled so kissably under thrills of pleasures, pausing at the door for half-a-second to acknowledge the justice of her 'dear Greville's' displeasure, with a hasty gesture of obeisance Emma hastened from the room. Half-an-hour later she re-appeared before him, no longer in her gala-costume, but in her plainest and cheapest dress, and with an air of contrition and of a sincere desire to render him the only atonement in her power, entreated him to dismiss her from his presence for ever. As he was ashamed of her, she ought to leave him for ever.

Even if he suspected her of acting, Mr. Greville would have married her within a month of this pretty submission, had he loved her. But Mr. Greville never regarded her with a passion worthy of love's sacred name. He honoured her for her beauty and her other fine natural endowments. At times, he even revered her for them,—all the while regarding her only as a connoisseur regards a thing of finest art. If he was ever near marrying her (which I doubt, though many people were certain he meant to make her his wife), this elegant connoisseur only thought of doing so, from a wish to appropriate to

himself, as securely as possible, the most classical head and neck he had ever seen on the shoulders of a living woman. His letters to her, his whole treatment of her (beneficent though it was for four entire years), the considerations that caused him to part with her at the beginning of the fifth year, the way in which he passed her on to another collector, as the finest conceivable bit of antique art in young flesh and blood, all show that he never really loved her.

CHAPTER VI.

THE PHILOSOPHERS OF THE GREEN.

Sir William Hamilton re-visits England—His Character, Achievements, and Distinctions—The Ape and the Antiquary—Sir William hopping about a Drawing-room on his Back-bone—His early *Mariage de Convenance*—Rumours of a second Marriage—Mr. Charles Greville's Alarm—Sir William and 'the fair Tea-maker'—'Finer than Anything in Antique Art'—Pliny the Elder—Pliny the Younger—Pettigrew's charitable Suggestion—The Beginning of the Game—The younger Pliny's pecuniary Embarrassments—His Confidence in Emma—Friends in Council—The Elder Pliny speaks to Emma confidentially—She starts for Cheshire.

1784 A.D.

OBTAINING leave to come to England for the arrangement of his affairs, Sir William Hamilton, after a long absence from Great Britain, reappeared in London in the summer of 1784, when he was in the 55th year of his age, and in the brightest term of his reputation. Of the remarkable Scotchmen of George the Third's time, few attained to greater celebrity, or still claim more respectful consideration, than the brilliant, learned, and versatile Sir William Hamilton. Less indebted for his social eminence to the influence of his House and the favour of his Sovereign, than to his own energy, adroitness, and intellectual power, he would under any circumstances of birth and adversity

have risen to distinction. Reared under auspicious conditions, he became, ere he had crossed the middle line of middle age, one of the most interesting personages of his period. A man of science, he was a naturalist of the highest merit; a man of letters, he would be honourably remembered at the present day, even though his reputation rested wholly on his published writings; a man of taste, he was the Prince of the Connoisseurs. In official life he maintained the credit of British diplomacy, though, in the last two or three years of his long term of public employment, when he had survived his original acuteness and discretion, he sank in the esteem of Ministers, and fell out of favour at the Treasury. But with all his solid attainments and success in serious enterprises, he shone most brightly as a man of society and of the world. A master of all the higher accomplishments, he delighted in all the elegant frivolities. A good linguist, he was at home in the literatures of France and Italy. Singing well, he played several musical instruments, sketched with ability, and was the best dancer at the Neapolitan Court.

If he was not a wit of the brightest water, he had a fine sense of humour. Himself a superb antiquary, in the highest sense of the term, he rated the mere pretenders of the archæological cliques at their precise worth, and was often tickled by their absurdities, till tears of laughter rolled down his face. In 1780, he was at great pains to train his Indian monkey to handle a magnifying-glass, and examine antique medals through it. As he told Mr. Greville, this was done 'by way of laughing at antiquarians.'

At the same time, he was proficient in the manlier pastimes. A man of a spare figure, great muscular power, singular activity, and inexhaustible nervous energy, he delighted in excursions that tested his powers of bodily endurance, and confirmed his physical endowments. A good horseman, he was a dead shot. A *bon-vivant* and a keen sportsman, he held the admiration of the Bourbon of Naples, who found his liveliest enjoyments in the pleasures of the table and the slaughter of wild animals. And this passion for the fiercer and more hazardous kinds of sport was combined with a fondness for the mildest and least laborious sorts of angling. In the last summer of his existence, when he could not sit safely in the saddle, and could no longer 'hop about a room on his backbone, his arms, legs, star and ribbon all flying about in the air'—a display of activity by which he astonished Mrs. Trench and a roomful of courtly people at Dresden, in the October of 1800, when he was seventy years of age—the rapidly failing veteran was often seen in his punt on the Thames, amusing himself, after the fashion of Isaac Walton, with a few congenial followers of the gentle craft.

A soldier at the outset of his manly career, he was an officer of the 3rd regiment of Foot Guards from 1747 to 1758, and as an ensign served in Holland under the Duke of Cumberland. Qualified in every respect for military service, he would doubtless have figured amongst the notable generals of his period, had he remained in the army and escaped premature death in battle. But in 1758, acting on the advice of the Prince of Wales, whom he had served as an

equerry for some five years, the young soldier resigned his lieutenant's commission from pique at an appointment that placed a junior subaltern over his head. Henceforth William Hamilton sought and achieved distinction in civil employment, but to the last he retained the air and carriage of a man of arms.

Though he lived to do strangely imprudent things, the career of this curious and admirable Sir William Hamilton had, up to 1784, been scarcely less remarkable for worldly prudence than for the higher kinds of worldly cleverness. A Scotchman by race and birth, he had been something of 'a canny Scot' by nature. No heir to broad acres, he had in early life bethought himself that he would do well to acquire by marriage what he had no prospect of acquiring by inheritance. In accordance with this prudent regard for his own interests, young Mr. Hamilton had in his 28th year married a Welsh heiress, known in her maidenly time as Miss Barlow of Clarges Street, daughter of Hugh* Barlow, Esq., of Lawrenny Hall, co. Pembroke; marrying her, not because he loved her, but 'something against his own inclination,' (as he frankly confessed to his nephew Charles, whilst the lady was still living), because she was heiress to the modest estate that, after its skilful development, yielded a revenue of £5,000 a-year. But though he married the amiable and fairly personable lady, from this not distinctly honourable motive, and could some

* The St. Stephen's reviewer (*vide*, his papers on Emma Hamilton in the 'St. Stephen's Review,' 1883, 1884) says that Miss Barlow was the daughter of Sir John Barlow. But, though the reviewer may be right on this point, I prefer to follow the precise and authorized statement of Burke's 'Peerage.'

thirty years later talk so naively of his reason for marrying her, he played the part of a thoroughly devoted husband to her from their wedding-day in January, 1758, to the day of her death in 1782, when he interred her honourably, and was for a few weeks rather sorry to have lost her. The only issue of this rather successful *mariage de convenance* was a daughter, whose death in 1775 has already been noticed.

On re-visiting England in his 55th year, Sir William Hamilton had therefore been a widower for full two years; and there were rumours in the air that the widower—so youthful for his years as to look little more than forty years old, though he did *not* look his favourite nephew's junior—was looking about him for a second wife. Already two different ladies were said to have received such attentions from him as to make it more than probable that the one or the other of them would soon be figuring at Naples as the wife of His Britannic Majesty's Minister. A matter of anxious conversation within the lines of the Greville connection, this gossip was current in 'society.' It is needless to say that this tattle did not exhilarate Mr. Charles Greville, who, since 1775, through the influence of circumstances—*not* from any definite declaration by Sir William himself—had come to regard himself almost as his uncle's heir-apparent. Lady Hamilton's death in 1782 had not greatly alarmed the nephew; for, knowing him intimately, Mr. Greville thought it much less likely his uncle would marry again than that he would make for himself a domestic alliance that would not require the sanction of the church. But whatever arrangement he might

make for his domestic contentment, whether it should be marriage or the other thing, the nephew was confident that his uncle, who had married in early life, 'something against his inclination,' would in his choice of a second mate be controlled wholly by his inclination, and elect for the object of his affectionate admiration a young woman. The two ladies, with whom his uncle's name was even now mentioned by rumour, were both young. The issue of an unsanctified arrangement would be children, to be moderately provided for by their sire. But offspring by a marriage would put Sir William's favourite nephew out of succession to the Welsh estate. This talk about Sir William and a second marriage distressed Mr. Greville greatly.

Having a long leave of absence from Naples, Sir William had time to run about Great Britain during his holiday. After paying a visit to his kindred at Warwick Castle, he journeyed to Pembrokeshire, to look at the estate that had come to him through the gentlewoman, whom he had married 'something against his inclination.' Going to Scotland, he tarried for a while with divers people of his ducal house. But all the earlier time of his holidays he spent in London; and in London he entered no house so often as his nephew's pleasant abode, in Edgware Row, Paddington,—saw no woman who, in his opinion, was comparable with Emma for beauty, expression, humour, fascinating sweetness. Again and again, he spoke rapturously to Charles of the singular loveliness of the angel he had drawn down from Heaven to Paddington Green. 'She is, I think,' Mr. Greville

assented complacently, 'about as perfect a thing as can be found in all Nature.'—'My dear Charles,' returned the elder Connoisseur, raising his voice emphatically, 'she is better than any-thing in Nature. In her particular way, she is finer than anything that is to be found in antique art!'—'I agree with you, Hamilton,' responded the younger Connoisseur. 'I don't think that *even* Art has done anything so good.' For the first time, the elder Connoisseur saw his nephew in possession of an *objet d'art*, which he would fain draw to his collection of interesting and beautiful things. Not slow to see how his uncle coveted the *objet d'art*, Mr. Greville ere long began to debate within himself, whether it would not be well to pass this thing of beauty and joy for ever, on to the collector, who had with other things the fee-simple of the Welsh estate.

Sir William Hamilton had too many engagements during the London season, to be able to dine often at Paddington Green; but, so long as he remained in town, an afternoon seldom passed in which he failed to drop in at Edgware Row for a cup of tea from Emma's hands, a song from her voice, and some musical drollery and racy rattle from her lips. If he was enamoured of her beauty, he was beside himself with astonishment and admiration at her dramatic genius, when for the first time in his presence she made her countenance assume, one after another, the various expressions of feeling, depicted in Romney's various pictures of her. Capable of investing her mobile features with the show of any emotion or state of feeling,—placidity, contentment, sensitiveness,

patience, sorrow, shame, guiltiness of conscience, anger, terror, cruelty—she rehearsed for her guest's diversion at Paddington Green all the facial enactments and aspects that were in later time the most important part of her famous 'attitudes.'

After the wont of young people, Emma at her first view of him thought Sir William quite an old gentleman, and, in his absence, spoke of him as an old gentleman to Mr. Greville, who with unusual liveliness, and a curious show of alarm, begged her not to say so in Hamilton's hearing, or any-one's hearing,—not even when her Greville was her only auditor. But as the weeks went on, she was less observant of the oldness of his appearance (indeed, *that* almost passed from her view), than astonished at his abnormal juvenility. Again and again she said to herself he was 'the most juvenile man for his years' she had ever known or heard of. But she did not venture to say so much on the delicate subject even to 'dear Greville,' for fear she should again frighten him.

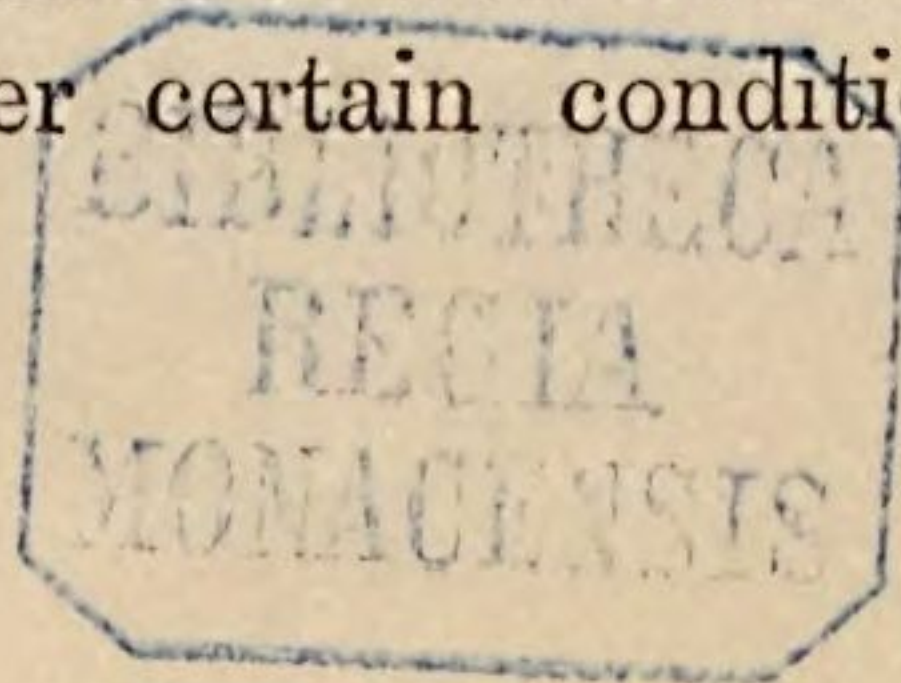
Sir William Hamilton being a man of the world, and it being in Emma's way to be natural and quite at her ease with strangers, it is not surprising that the diplomatist and Mr. Greville's *protégée* were at ease with one another, from the first moment of their first interview. That Emma spoke of the diplomatist's oldness to Greville immediately after the interview was the more natural, because Sir William's light, bantering talk implied a wish that she should regard him as a veteran. Addressing her as his fair disciple, he styled himself a philosopher, and expressed a hope

that, in his philosophic character, he might be allowed to instruct her on things in general. Yes, he would be her Pliny the Elder, whilst Charles should be her Pliny the Younger. Seeing from her countenance, that she had never before heard of Pliny the Elder, he told her something of the learned ancient, and named a few points in which he resembled Pliny. He (Sir William) was a philosopher, so was Pliny. He was a naturalist, Pliny had been a naturalist. Pliny was the author of a great many books; he (the speaker) was an author of books. Pliny had a sister, to whom he was strongly attached; he (the speaker) whilom had a sister, who was unspeakably dear to him. Pliny's sister had a son, whom he loved and adopted and made his heir; the speaker's sister had a son, whom he loved and had in a certain sense adopted. Pliny had been at Misenum; the speaker could say the same of himself. Pliny had witnessed an eruption of Mount Vesuvius; the speaker had seen a grand eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Pliny had *meant* to take notes of his Vesuvian eruption and to write a book about it; the speaker *had* taken notes of his Vesuvian eruption, and written a lot about it. Pliny died of his Vesuvian eruption; fortunately Vesuvius had not yet been the death of the speaker, but it might kill him some day. Pliny had died in his 56th year; alas! the speaker was in his 55th year,—but he hoped to live longer than Pliny. Surely, he had made out a good case, why Emma should call him Pliny, and allow him to be her Pliny. Of course, Emma declared the case fully made out, and consented to take him for her Pliny. On Sir William's next

visit to her drawing-room, Emma held out her hand and said in the way of her easiest and most matter-of-course cordiality, 'How d'you do, Pliny?' Henceforth, Emma usually called him 'Pliny,' unless she felt it needful, for some especial reason, to address him more respectfully. In the days when he was her Pliny, Sir William used to speak of her—not to her face, but in confidence to Mr. Charles Greville—as 'the fair tea-maker of Edgware Row.'

Alluding to the relation in which Sir William and the 'fair tea-maker' stood to one another during her first term of residence in Italy, Dr. Pettigrew says, 'It is only charitable to suppose Sir William to have been ignorant of his nephew's connexion with Emma.' If Dr. Pettigrew is right on this point, mere charity can be extremely foolish and hypocritical. The uncle and nephew were intimate friends; and a necessary consequence of their intimacy was that Sir William Hamilton was as fully informed of the terms on which she and Mr. Greville lived together, as he would have been informed of the other terms, had the couple been husband and wife. The suggestion that a man of Sir William Hamilton's worldly knowingness may have imagined that Mr. Greville and Emma were held together by purely platonic sentiment, is too ridiculous for serious consideration. But as the absurd suggestion has been made, it is as well to say that, on entering the Paddington Green house for the first time, Sir William knew he was entering the home of his nephew's 'mistress.'

Even such an old hand at worldliness as Sir William Hamilton may under certain conditions be easily



misled by appearances. Before leaving London with his nephew, Sir William imagined he had detected in Mr. Greville signs of displeasure at Pliny's too demonstrative tenderness towards 'the fair tea-maker.' If the signs of displeasure were not wholly due to Sir William's fancy, they were the insincere veil of feelings very different from disapproval. The uncle and nephew were already at the beginning of a rather long game. In a game of two, the cooler of the two players, if they are otherwise evenly matched, is the one of them who has the better view of the sport, and of his adversary's purpose. In this particular game, Mr. Greville was the cooler, and in that respect the superior of his uncle. Whilst Sir William knew his own purpose, the nephew saw for what he was playing, and also what his uncle wanted.

Before the end of the London season, Sir William and Mr. Greville had spoken freely to one another about the pecuniary embarrassments of the latter. For some years Mr. Greville had been living somewhat beyond his means. In Portman Square he had been, till he migrated to Paddington, no mere occupant of apartments in a superb fashionable lodging-house, but the tenant of one of the smaller houses of the Square. In taking a brief term of this house, Mr. Greville took a step from which his uncle would fain have dissuaded him. The younger son, with only £500 a-year and a very few thousands to play with, of course, knew his income was insufficient for a man of his status, living in so fashionable a square. But he was hopeful of getting 'a place,' and winning an heiress, and thought he should increase his chances

of acquiring both by 'keeping up appearances,' so as to make his acquaintance imagine him rich enough to keep house in Portman Square. In other respects he was an almost severely economical man, for a person of his quality. No doubt he bought pictures and *bric-à-brac*; but, knowing all about articles of art and *virtu*, he did not squander his capital in buying them, but on the contrary invested it to advantage. As 'the place' did not fall to the aspirant till he had waited for it for years (indeed, till he had parted with Emma, on finding her an obstacle to his matrimonial schemes, and a luxury he could not afford), and as the heiress was never won, the householder of Portman Square hampered himself with debts, before he determined to move to a cheaper house and less fashionable neighbourhood.

His resolve to withdraw from Portman Square was made just about the time of Sir Harry Fetherstonehaugh's rupture with the girl, who then called herself Emily; but the interest he took in her does not seem to have influenced him in moving from the Square, though it unquestionably was chiefly accountable for his next choice of an abode. Selling more than enough of his *objets d'art* and *virtu*, for the satisfaction of his more urgent creditors, he carried the remainder (which was also the greater part) of his valuable collection to the new home, where he also guarded Sir William Hamilton's 'favourite Correggio,' and several other pictures that had been confided to his keeping by his uncle. At the same time, he reserved for immediate current expenses, and other exigencies, a considerable proportion of

the money coming to him from the recent sale of effects.

This being his financial position on his coming to Paddington Green, Mr. Greville did well in telling Emma all about his affairs, as soon as he had satisfied himself he could do so with safety. Flattering to her pride and self-love, the confidence he reposed in her at once counteracted any lingering disposition of her mind for a renewal of her former levity and extravagance. It confirmed her in all her resolves to become after all a good girl. On discovering how troubled he had been about money for himself, at the very moment of his noble munificence to her, she honoured him still more highly for what she called his 'goodness.' It was only by assuring her he could, in his new and less prodigal way of living, afford to give her so much that he reconciled her to the thought of how much he was spending on her dress and education. Hence her care to keep down 'the weekly bills,' and her forbearance to ask for pleasures that would put him to expense. But notwithstanding the goodness of Emma's behaviour, and the marvellous smallness of the sum with which she and her mother kept the house going, Mr. Greville was still living somewhat beyond his income. By leaving Portman Square, he had escaped immediate catastrophe. But in Edgware Row he was nearing the time when it would be needful for him to live still more economically, unless he should 'get a place,' or come in for some other stroke of luck. For at any time a crisis in his affairs might compel him to arrange with his creditors on terms that would strip him of

everything but his annuity. Probably that crisis would not come for two or three years, but it might come sooner.

On hearing the state of his affairs, Sir William Hamilton told his nephew he must look out more sharply for the heiress. 'The place' would come some day; of course, with their interest, a fit berth would be found for him sooner or later; but as occupants of good berths always lived to extreme old age, and seldom surrendered them before they died, the berth to afford him financial contentment might not be vacant for some years. It was manifest that he must seize the first opportunity of making a prudent match. Thinking he saw in 'Charles's' face a show of repugnance to the proposal, 'Hamilton' recalled how he had himself married 'somewhat against his inclination,' and how much comfort he had derived from his *mariage de convenance*. Somewhat to Sir William's relief, instead of rising in mutiny against such counsel, Mr. Greville observed in quite a reasonable manner that he saw clearly it must soon come to that. Still he was of opinion that no good could ensue from precipitancy in the matter. Indeed, immediate action was out of the question. Before he could with propriety make overtures to a suitable family for the hand of a young lady with £30,000—or say, with no more than £20,000—for her fortune, arrangements must be made that could not be effected in a trice, or without a good deal of nice consideration. All of which from Mr. Greville's lips confirmed Sir William in his high opinion of his nephew's good sense, and discretion, and reasonableness.

Finding how fully Emma had been admitted to her Greville's confidence, Pliny the Elder took occasion to intimate to the fair tea-maker that as he had nothing more to discover about his dear Charles's pecuniary straits, he should not be easy in his own mind till he had discovered some unexceptionable way of putting Pliny the Younger in a state of financial repose. The right way of compassing so desirable an end could not be discovered so easily as she might imagine. Of course, Pliny the Younger would some years hence discover that he had never overrated the beneficence of his uncle's designs for his advantage. But when there was need of prompter measures for the Younger Pliny's comfort, it mattered little what might happen years hence. It would perhaps be better that Emma should refrain from mentioning to 'dear Greville' what Pliny the Elder had said to her on this delicate subject. Pliny the Elder ventured to say thus much to her, on the eve of her departure for Cheshire, because he wished to relieve her mind of a particular anxiety before she went off for her trip. In conclusion, speaking in his courtliest and tenderest style, as though he were addressing a gentlewoman of the highest degree, instead of a young person whose position had better not be precisely stated in this page, Pliny the Elder hoped that, after enjoying Emma's society, and drawing a pure joy from the contemplation of her loveliness throughout successive weeks, he might venture to say that, should she ever require a loyal admirer to guard her from wrong or solace her in sorrow, she would make him a proud and happy man by requiring him to prove himself her devoted servant.

On the morrow, when Emma took her place in the stage-coach for Chester, she did so under the observation of both the Plinies. Looking with tearful eyes through the coach window, as the 'leaders' leaped forward and the 'wheelers' settled themselves into their collars, and the guard on the roof sounded his horn, Emma saw both the philosophers bowing lowly and reverentially towards her. At that moment it occurred to her how remiss she had been in not kissing dear Sir William Hamilton before she stepped into the coach. But for the pain this recollection occasioned her, she was comforted by reflecting how fully she had yesterday expressed her gratitude to that 'dear, dear Sir William,' for his kind words to her and for his generous disposition towards her 'dear Greville.'

CHAPTER VII.

‘OUT OF TOWN.’

Emma revisits Cheshire—She takes her Child from Hawarden—Arrangement for the Child’s Education—Emma’s Letters from Parkgate to Mr. Greville—Her bountiful Gift to her Grandmother Kidd—Her Intercourse with her Child—Bathing and Sea-Air—Emma’s Idolatry of the good Mr. Greville—His Silence and apparent Neglect of Her—The Postman *never* brings her a Letter—At length she hears from Mr. Greville—She returns to Town—Her Illness at Paddington—Her good Resolutions—Sir William Hamilton’s Increasing Kindness to Her—A dazzling Destiny—The Invitation to Naples—Sir William Hamilton’s Return to Italy.

1784 A.D.

IT had been arranged between Mr. Greville and Emma that, whilst he should be journeying about the country and visiting great houses with his uncle Hamilton, she, in the company of her mother, should go to Chester, visit her grandmother at Hawarden, and, carrying her child off from Dame Kidd’s cottage, pass a few weeks at one of the watering-places of Wales or Cheshire. On getting to Wales, she could choose the watering-place; but Mr. Greville was inclined to think she could not make a better choice than Abergele, where the bathing was good and the sands were excellent. Anyhow, she was enjoined to spend most of her time at the seaside and bathe in

the sea every day, as sea-air and salt water had been prescribed by her medical adviser for a rather troublesome affection of the skin, that was causing inflammatory eruption on the surface of her knees and elbows.

Towards the close of his rural wanderings and visits, Mr. Greville would give her timely notice to return to town, to get the house into order against his re-appearance at Paddington Green. On returning to Edgware Row, she might bring her child with her, not, indeed, to remain under her mother's roof for any considerable time, but to be sent to a suitable school, where she would be treated no less tenderly than she had been at Hawarden, and where Emma would be able to see the little one frequently. To this considerate proposal Emma, ever mindful for her benefactor's purse, remarked almost deprecatingly that he would have to pay the schoolmistress more than he had been paying grandmother Kidd. But, on being assured by Mr. Greville he was prepared for the additional expenditure, and could afford it, Emma was vastly delighted at the prospect of having her little one with her for several weeks, and as good as with her for many a week afterwards. This child, be it observed, must no longer be spoken of as 'little Emily,' as the second of her mother's assumed Christian names had ere this been assigned to the little damsel. To the mother, of course, this plan for taking her child from the Flintshire cabin and placing her to a good preparatory school was another example of Mr. Greville's 'divine goodness;' but I am disposed to think it probable that, in making the beneficent

arrangement, the gentleman was actuated in no higher degree by concern for the elder Emma's moral welfare than by a deliberate opinion that the society of the child would be favourable to the mother's beauty, and might even give her a new expression, for Mr. Romney to paint. If the child resembled her mother, Emma, with the little girl asleep on her lap, would be a delicious subject for Romney, who might call the new painting of the new expression, 'Maternal Solitude.'

By Saturday, the 12th of June, 1784, Emma and Mrs. Cadogan had visited Hawarden, passed a few days with Dame Kidd (to whom Emma gave an honorarium of five guineas), and taken possession of Emma the Younger, who seems, from the mother's words about the child, to have been at this time between four and five years of age. Having decided against Abergele as too remote, fashionable, and costly, Mrs. Cadogan and her daughter were uncertain whether they should go for sea-air and bathing to High Lake, a place with only three houses in it, or to Parkgate (hard by Great Neston), on the mouth of Dee, already a bathing-place of repute amongst the people of Cheshire, Flintshire, and Lancashire. After deciding against High Lake, when they had ascertained that the best of its three houses was a small tavern for weather-driven sailors, the beauty and her mother concurred in saying they must be very careful of their money, and make a good bargain for lodging, and cater for themselves in the most frugal manner, at so expensive and even fashionable a place as Parkgate.

From Chester, on the 12th of June, 1784, Emma wrote this letter to the Hon. Charles Greville :

‘ Chester, Satturday morning,
[‘ 12th of June, 1784.]

‘ MY DEAR GREVILLE,

‘ I have had no letter from you yett, which makes me unhappy. I can’t go to Abbergelly, as it is forty miles, and a very uncumfortable place, and I am now going to Parkgate, as it is the only place beside High Lake I can go to ; but I will try to go there. Pray, my dear Greville, do write directly, and lett it be left at the Post Office, Parkgate, tell calld for. God bless you ! I have got my poor Emma with me and I have took leave of all my friends. I have took her from a good home, and I hope she will prove worthy of your goodness to her and her mother. I should not write now tell I got to Parkgate, only I want to hear from you. Pray write, my dear Greville, directly, and send me word how to bile that bark ; for parting with you made so unhappy, I forgot the book. I can’t stop to write, for the coach is waiting. My dear Greville, don’t be angry, but I gave my granmother 5 guineas ; for she had laid some [money] out on her (*i.e.*, the child—*Ed.*), and I would not take her awhay shabbily. But Emma shall pay you. Adué my ever dear Greville, and believe yours ever truly—EMMA HART.

‘ I will write on Monday again. My love to Sir W[illiam], and say everything that you can. I am low-spirited ; so do excuse me. My dear Greville, I wish I was with you. God bless you.’

Emma’s bountiful gift to her grandmother, at a moment she was so desirous of sparing Mr. Greville’s purse, is indicative of her generous free-handedness to people, who, whilst needing money, were good to her. From her need for information, how ‘to bile that bark,’ it may be inferred that the doctor had prescribed tonic medicine, as well as sea-bathing and sea-air for ‘the fair tea-maker.’ Unable to keep her

promise to write again on Monday, she wrote on Tuesday to Mr. Greville in these terms:—

‘Parkgate, June the 15, 1784.

‘MY DEAREST GREVILLE,

‘You see by the date where I am gott and likely to be; and yett it is not through any neglect of seeking after other places. As to Abbergely it is 40 miles, and so dear that I could not with my mother and me and the child have been there under 2 guines and a half a-week. It is grown such a fashionable place. And High Lake as 3 houses in it, and not one of them as is fit for a Christian. The best is a publick-house for the sailers of such ships as is oblidge to put in there, so you see there is no possibility of going to either of those places. Has to where I am, I find it very comfortable, considering from you. I am in the house of a Laidy, whoes husband is at sea. She and her grammother live to-gether, and we board with her at present, till I hear from you. The price is high, but they don’t lodge anybody without boarding; and as it is comfortable, decent and quiet, I thought it would not ruin us, tell I could have your oppionon, which I hope to have freely and without restraint, as, believe me, you will give it to one, who will allways be happy to follow it, lett it be what it will. As I am sure you would not lead me wrong, and though my little temper may have been sometimes high, believe me, I have allways thought you in the right in the end, when I have come to reason. I bathe, and find the water very soult. Here is a great many ladys bathing, but I have no society with them, as it is best not. So pray, my dearest Greville, write soon and tell me what to do, as I will do just what you think proper; and tell me what to do with the child. For she is a great romp, and I can hardly master her. I don’t think she is ugly, but I think her greatly improved. She is tall [has] good eyes and brows, and as to lashes she will be passible; but she has over-grown all her cloaths. I am makeing and mending all as I can for her. Pray, my dear Greville, do lett me come home as soon as you can; for I am all most broken-hearted being from you. Indeed I have no plasure nor happiness. I wish I could not think on you; but, if I was the greatest laidy in the world, I should not

be happy from you. So don't lett me stay long. Tell Sir William everything you can, and tell him I am sorry our sittuation prevented [me] from giving him a kiss, but my heart was ready to break. But I will give it him, and entreat if he will axcept it. Ask him how I looked, and lett him say something kind to me when you write. Indead, my dear Greville, you dont know how much I love you. And your behaviour to me, wen we parted, was so kind, Greville, I don't know what to do; but I will make you a mends by my kind behaviour to you. For I have grattude, and I will show it you all I can. So don't think of my faults, Greville. Think of all my good, and blot out all my bad: for it is all gone and berried, never to come again. So, good-by, dear Greville. Think of nobody but me, for I have not a thought but of you. God bless you and believe me Your Truly & Affectionately

‘EMMA H—T.

‘P.S.—Poor Emma gives her duty to you. I bathe her. The people is very civil to ous. I give a guinea and half a-week for ous all together, but you will tell me what to do. God bless you, my dear Greville. I long to see you, for endead I am not happy from you, tho I will stay if you like till a week before you go home, but I must go first. I hav had no letter from you, and you promised to write to me before I left home. It made me unhappy, but I thought you might [have no] time. God bless you once more, dear Greville. Direct for me at Mrs. Darnwood's, Parkgate near Chester, and write directly.’

The address on this letter (*By London*:—Mr. Greville, M.P., Haverford West, Pembrokeshire) shows one of the places visited by Pliny the Elder and Pliny the Younger, whilst their ‘fair tea-maker’ was staying on the marge of her native promontory of Chester, at a cost of thirty-one shillings and sixpence a-week, for the board and lodging of herself, her mother, and her child,—a guinea per week less than the careful Emma would have had to pay at fashion-

able Abergele. The picture she gives of herself, as busy with her needle, making new clothes and mending old clothes for her romp of a girl, while Mr. Greville and his uncle were looking over the Welsh estate, is curiously out of harmony with much that has been written about the general disorderliness and financial recklessness of Emma's life, in the days when she was Romney's model. The message to Sir William Hamilton was, of course, a message of apology for the remissness that had troubled her, as soon as the London coach had fairly started on the journey for Chester.

On Tuesday, the 22nd of June, 1784, Emma began the next letter, which was not finished till the following Sunday, the 27th of June, when she had at length received the letter from her patron, which to her keen annoyance the successive posts of a long fortnight had failed to bring her.

‘ Parkgate : June the 22nd, 1784.

‘ MY EVER DEAR GREVILLE,

‘ How tedious does the time pass away tell I hear from you. I think it ages since I saw you—years since I heard from you. Endead I should be miserable, if I did not recollect in what happy terms we parted—parted but to meet again with tenfold happiness. Oh, Greville, when I think on your goodness, your tender kindness, my heart is so full of grattitude, that I want words to express it. But I have one happiness in vew, which I am determined to practice, and that is eveness of temper and steadiness of mind. For, endead, I have thought so much of your amiable goodness, when you have been tried to the utmost, that I will, endead I will, manage myself, and try to be like Greville. Endead, I can never be like him. But I will do all I can towards it, and I am sure you will not desire more. I think, if the time would come over again, I would be differant.

But it does not matter. There is nothing like buying experience. I may be happier for it hereafter, and I will think of the time coming and not the time past, except to make comparrasone, to show you what alterations there is for the best. So, my dearest Greville, dont think on my past follies ; think on my good—little as it has been. And I will make you amends by my kind behaviour ; you shall never repent your partiality. If you had not behaved with such angel-like goodness to me at parting, it would not have had such effect on me. I have done nothing but think of you since. And, oh, Greville, did you but know, when I so think, what thoughts—what tender thoughts [I have], you would say “ Good God ! and can Emma have such feeling sensibility ? No, I never could think it. But now I may hope to bring her to conviction, and she may prove a valluable and amiable whoman ! ” True, Greville ! and you shall not be disapointed. I will be everything you can wish. But mind you, Greville, your own great goodness has brought this about. You don’t know what I am. Would you think it, Greville ?—Emma—the wild unthinking Emma is a grave thoughtful phylosopher. Tis true, Greville, and I will convince you I am, when I see you. But how I am runing on. I say nothing about this giddy wild girl of mine. What shall we do with her, Greville ? She is as wild and as thoughtless as somebody, when she was a little girl ; so you may gess how that is. Whether she will like it or no, there is no telling. But one comfort is [that she is] a little afraid on me. Would you believe, on Satturday whe had a little quarel. I mean Emma and me ; and I did slap her on her hands, and when she came to kiss me and make it up, I took her on my lap and cried. Now do you blame me or not ? Pray tell me. Oh, Greville, you don’t know how I love her. Endead I do. When she comes and looks in my face and calls me “ mother,” endead I then truly am a mother ; for all the mother’s feelings rise at once, and tells [me] I am and ought to be a mother. For she has a wright to my protection, and she shall have it as long as I can, and I will do all I can to prevent her falling into the error her poor once miserable mother fell into.

‘ But why do I say miserable ? Am I not happy abbove any of my sex, at least in my situation ? Does not Greville

love me, or at least like me? Does not he protect me? Does not he provide for me? Is not he a father to my child? Why do I call myself miserable? No, it was a mistake, and I will be happy, cheerful and kind, and do all my poor ability will let me, to return the fatherly goodness and protection he has shewn [me]. Again, my dear Greville, the recollection of past scenes brings tears in my eyes. But they are tears of happiness. To think of your goodness is too much. But, once for all, Greville, I will be good to you.

‘It is near bathing time, and I must lay down my pen. I won’t finish till I see when the post comes, whether there is a letter. He comes in about one a clock. I hope to have a letter so to-day.

‘I must not forget to tell you my knees is well, as I may say. There is hardly a mark, and my elbows is much better. I eat my vittuels very well, and I am quite strong and feel hearty, and I am in hopes I shall be very well. You can’t think how soult the watter is. And there is a many laidys bathing here. But, Greville, I am obliged to give a shilling a day for the bathing horse and whoman, and twopence a day for the dress. It is a great expense, and it frets me now I think of it. But when I think how well I am, and my elbows likely to get well, it makes me quite happy. For at any rate it is better than paying the docter. But wright your oppinion truly and tell me what to do. Emma is crying because I won’t come and bathe. So, Greville, adue tell after I have dipt. May God bless you, my dearest Greville, and believe me faithfully, affectionately and truly yours only—EMMA H.

‘Thursday Morning.

‘And no letter from my dear Greville. Why, my dearest Greville, what is the reason you don’t wright? If you knew my uneasyness, you would. You promised to write before I left Howeden, and I was much disapointed you did not, but thought you might have a opportunity being at Wandower [? Wendover] Hill. I have sent 2 letters to Haverford West, and has never had no answer to them, and it is now 3 weeks since I saw you. Pray, my dearest Greville, wright to me and make me happy; for I am not so att present, though my arm is quite well.

‘I think if I could but hear from you, I should be happy. So make [me] happy, do, pray. Give my dear kind love and compliments to Pliney, and tell him I put you under his care, and he must be answerable for you to me, when I see him. I hope he has [not] fell in love with any raw-boned Scotchwhoman, whoes fortune would make up for the want of beauty, and then he may soon through her [die] in a decline.—Mum ! For he is fond of portraits in that whay, and then he must be fond of orriginals, and it will answer every purpose. But don’t put him in mind of it, for fear ——. But offer and say everything you can to him for me, and tell him I shall allways think on him with gratitude and remember him with pleasure, and allways regret laeving is [leaving his] good company. Tell him I wish him every happiness this world can afford him, that I will pray for him, and bless him as long as I live. I am wrighting, ’tis true, but I dont know when you will ever gett it. For I can’t send itt, till I hear from you, and the Post wont be in tell to morro. Pray, my dear Greville, lett me go home soon. I have been 3 weeks, and if I stay a fortnight longer, that will be 5 weeks, you know ; and then the expense is above 2 guineas a week, with washing and bathing whoman and everything ; and I think a fortnightt or three weeks longer I shall not have a spot.

‘Friday morning: 12 o’clock [25th June].

‘With what impatienc do I sett down to wright tell I see the postman. But sure I shall have a letter to-day. Can you, my dear Greville,—no, you can’t—have forgot your poor Emma already. Tho’ I am but for a few weeks absent from you, my heart will not one moment leave you. I am allways thinking of you, and could almost fancy I hear you, see you ; and think, Greville, what a disapointment when I find myself deceived, and ever nor never heard from you. But my heart wont lett me scold you. Endead, it thinks on you with two much tenderness. So do wright, my dear Greville. Don’t you remember how you promised ? Dont you recollect what you said at parting ?—how you should be happy to see me again ? O Greville, think on me with kindness ! Think how many happy days weeks and years—I hope—we may yett pass. And think out of some that is past, there [h]as been some little pleasure as well as

pain ; and, endead, did you but know how much I love you, you would freily forgive me any passed quarels. For I now suffer for them, and one line from you would make me happy. So pray do wright, and tell me when you will be returning, as I shall be happy to see you again. For whilst Emma lives, she must be gratefully and ever affectionately
Your

‘EMMA HART.

‘P.S.—This shall not go tell I have a letter from you, which I hope to have in half-an-hour. Adue, my dear kind Greville.

‘Sunday Morning [27th June].

‘MY DEAR GREVILLE, I had a letter on Friday from my granmother, and she sent me one from you, that had been there a fortnight. I am much oblidge to you for all the kind things you say to me, and tell Sir William I am much oblidge to him for saying I looked well. I hope he will allways think so ; for I am proud of [his] good word, and I hope I shall never forfeit it. I will at least study to deserve it. I am in hopes [to] have a letter from you, for it is a great comfort to me to hear from you. My dear Greville, it is now going on for a month since I saw you. But I think how happy I shall be to see you again, to thank you for your kindness to my poor Emma and me. She shall thank you, Greville, she shall be gratefull, she shall be good, and make you amends for all the trouble her mother has caused you. But how am I to make you amends ? God knows, I shall never have it in my power. But, Greville, you shall have no cause to complain. I will try, I will do my utmost ; —and I can only regrett that fortune will not put it in my power to make a return for all the kindness and goodness you have showed me. Good-by. My dearest Greville Emma is much oblidge to you for remembering her, and she hopes you will give her a oppertunity of thanking you personally for your goodness to her. I think you wont be disapointed in her ; though mothers [Lord bless me, what a word for the gay wild Emma to say !] should not commend, but leave that for other people to do.’

There is no need to apologise for printing *in extenso* this long epistle, which grew on the writer’s hands,

whilst she was waiting with affectionate longing and natural impatience for the letter that would inform her how to address the budget to her patron. Mr. Greville's letter had been lying for a fortnight at Hawarden in grandmother Kidd's keeping. The kindly old dame would have been prompter in forwarding the epistle for which her grandchild was pining, had she imagined how acutely Emma was disappointed day after day as the postman came and went, without bringing the longed-for tidings from her dear, beneficent protector. Of course, letters were not answered so speedily a hundred years since under the old-world postal system as they are in these days of 'several daily deliveries' and telegrams *ad libitum*. But the girl, who waited so long for her sweetheart's letter, when she had sent him several epistles, and had seldom on any day omitted to write something for the earliest possible transmission to him, was, to put the case in the mildest way, sorely tried by what she deemed his negligence. And it says no little in favour of Emma's temper, for whose deficiencies she overflowed with meek and contrite acknowledgments, that, in this term of its sore trial, she expressed her annoyance and sense of neglect in no sharper terms. The waiting must have recalled to her mind what she suffered just two-and-a-half years since at Hawarden, when she sent her seven letters one after another to the unrelenting baronet, who never answered any one of them.

In other respects, the letter—abounding with exhibitions of the writer's want of conventional refinement, but nowhere displaying any lack of natural

delicacy—is creditable to this still quite young woman, who had so lately been a nursery-maid, and a tradesman's shop-waitress. No doubt the letter is the epistle of a young woman who, from the scholastic point of view, was a good deal less than *half-educated*, and even in that considerably less than a half was a decidedly *ill-educated* young woman. No doubt, it contains numerous passages, any one of which is sufficient to convince readers of a certain censorious kind, that she was 'quite a common young woman.' If I thought the readers of this censorious kind right on this particular point, it would all the same be clear to me that a quite common young woman may be, in the main, a good young woman, though in one most important respect a greatly erring young person. Most readers will, I am sure, concur with me in holding, that, notwithstanding the defects of their construction and orthography, several passages of this letter, especially those relating to her intercourse with, and sentiment for, her child, are pathetically charged with feminine tenderness and womanly feeling. Possibly, also, some readers may concur with me in thinking the entire letter countenances a rather strong opinion, that, if Mr. Greville had loved this beautiful young woman as much as he admired her, and had married her in 1784, she would have been a true wife to him till death parted them, and might perhaps have lived to be more highly honoured for her goodness than she ever was honoured for her beauty.

Yet another example may be given of the kind of letters, written by Emma from Parkgate to the gentleman whom she loved and honoured at this period of

her life,—and whom in later time, when she had recovered from a shock for which he was accountable, she regarded with esteem and gratitude.

‘Park Gate, July 3rd, 1784.

‘I was very happy, my dearest Greville, to hear from you, as your other letter vexed me; you scolded me so. But it is over, and I forgive you. I am much obliged to you for all the kind things you say to me, and I am very happy to think we shall meet soon again, happy, good-humoured and chearfull. I will be so, and I think there is no fear of you. You don’t know, my dearest Greville, what a pleasure I have to think that my poor Emma will be comfortable and happy; and Greville, and if she does but turn out well, what a happiness it will be. And I hope she will for your sake, and (I) will teach her to pray for you as long as she lives; and if she is not grateful and good, it won’t be my fault. What you say is very true:—a bad disposition may be [made] good by good example, and Greville would not put her anywhere to have a bad one. I come in to your way a-thinking [that] holidays spoils children. It takes their attention off from school. It gives them a bad habit when they have been a month and goes back. This does not please them, and that is not right, and they do nothing but think when they shall go back again. Now Emma will never expect what she never had. So I hope she will be very good, mild and attentive, and we may have a deal of comfort. And, Greville, if her poor mother had ever had the luck and prospect nearly in having a good education that she has, what a woman might she have been! But I won’t think My happiness now is Greville, and to think that he loves me makes me a recompense for all; for if he did not love me, would he be so kind and affectionate? No, ’tis impossible. Therefore I will have it so. I have said all my say about Emma, yet only she gives her duty. And I will now tell you a little about myself. I have not took but 2 of those things from Mr. W——, as the sea-water has done me so much good. I have drunk a tumbler glass every morning fasting, walked half-a-hour, and then bathed and breakfasted. I have the tang (?) applied to my knees and elbows every night going to bed, and every day (I have) washed

them twice a-day in the sea-water, and they ar just well. Therefore as long as I stay, I had better go on in my old whay, for I can take Mr. W's prescription at home, but not sea-water, tang, &c. I am very wel, looks well, has a good appetite and is better than ever I was in my life. I have no society with anybody but the mistress of the house, and her mother and sister. The latter is a very genteel yong lady, good-natured and does every thing to pleas me. But still I would rather be at home, if you was there. I follow the old saying, home is home though 'tis ever so homely. I must go to diner. Therefore I will say no more, but that I long to see you and dear Sir W[illiam]. Give my kind love to him. Tell him [that] next to you I love him abbove any body, and that I wish I was with him to give him a kiss. Don't be affronted, Greville. If I was with you I would give you a thousand, and you might take as many as you pleased, for I long—I mean I long to see you. My mother gives her comp^{ts}. to you and Sir W[illiam]. Say everything that is kind and well render me dear to him. To more than you can say my heart with gratitude assents, and I must ever remain

‘Your ever affectionate, and sincerely
‘E. H.

‘P.S.—Good by, my dear Greville. I hope we shall meet soon, happy and well. Adué! I bathe Emma and she is very well and grows. Her hair will grow very well on her forehead, and I don't think her nose will be very snub. Her eye is blue and pretty. She don't speak through her nose but she speaks countrified. We squable sometimes; still she is fond of me, and endead I love her. For she is sensible. So much for Beauty. I long to see you.’

Keeping his promise to give her timely notice of his arrangements for returning to town, Mr. Greville gave Emma more time than she needed for putting their house into good order for him. Pining as she was to be back in her pleasant home, she may have acted impulsively on a general announcement from him, that he would soon be again on the London pave-

ments. Or he may have changed his own plans, after ordering her to journey homewards. Anyhow, 'the fair tea-maker' was back in Edgware Row some few weeks before either the Elder Pliny came to her tea-table, or the Younger philosopher re-crossed his threshold. Perhaps they were to be congratulated on being away from town when Emma drooped under the illness (apparently a sharp attack of measles) that seized her soon after her return from Parkgate to Paddington. To this brief, but for a few days alarming, sickness, from which she seems to have recovered altogether before the middle of August, reference is made in the following letter:—

'Edgware Row, Tuesday, August 10th, 1784.

'I received your kind letter last night, and my dearest Greville I want words to express to you, how happy it made me. For I thought I was like a lost sheep and every body had forsook me. I was eight days confined to my room very ill, but am, thank God! very well now and a deal better for your kind instructing letter, and I own the justness of your remarks. You shall have your apartment to yourself. You shall read wright or set still, just as you please; for I shall think myself happy to be under the same roof with Greville, and do all I can to make it agreeable, without disturbing him in any pursuits that he can follow, to employ himself in at home or else where. For your absence has taught me that I ought to think myself happy if I was within a mile of you. So as I could see the place as contained you, I should think myself happy above my . . . So, my dear G., come home, and you shall find your home comfortable to receive you. You shall find me good, kind, gentle and affectionate, and every thing you wish me to do I will do. For I will give myself a fair trial, and follow your advice, for I allways think it wright. Therefore that shall ensure happiness for us boath. Dont think, Greville, this is the wild fancy of a moment's consideration, as it is not. I have thoroughly considered every think in my *confinement*, and I say nothing now but what I shall practice.

‘I must now inform you about my illness. My dear Greville, I had a rash out all over me and a fever, and I should have been worse, if I had not had the rash out. But I think I am better for it now; for I look fair and seem better in health than I was before. I dare say I should have been very dangerously ill, iff it had not come out. Pray, my dearest Greville, do come to see me, as soon as ever you come to town, for I do so long to see you. You don’t know how it will make me to be happy,—I mean if you should come before dinner. Do come [to dinner], because I know you will come at night. I have a deal to say to you when I see you. Oh, Greville, to think it is nine weeks since I saw you. I think I shall die with the pleasure of seeing you. Indeed, my dearest Greville, if you knew how much I think of you, you would love [me] for it, for I am all ways thinking on you, of your goodness. In short, Greville, I truly love you, and the thought of your coming home so soon makes me so happy, I don’t know what to do.

‘Good-by, my ever dearest Greville. May God preserve you and bless you, for ever prays your ever affectionately and sincerely, EMMA.

‘My kind love to Sr William; and tell him if he will come soon, I will give him a thousand kisses. For I do love him a little. Emma is very well and is allways wondering why you don’t come home. She sends her duty to you. Good by, my Dearest Greville. Pray, pray come as soon as you come to town. Good by, God bless you! Oh, how I long to see you.’

The Elder Pliny’s intercourse with his fair disciple was renewed, as soon as the philosopher returned to town from his wanderings and visits about the country, and was maintained with increasing cordiality and mutual liking throughout several weeks. In Sir William Hamilton’s judgment, ‘the fair tea-maker’ was more beautiful in feature and figure, more piquant in speech and winning in expression, at the opening of September, 1784, than she had been at the close

of the previous May. Fascinated by her personal charms, he was incessantly extolling her cleverness. Speaking to her confidentially about his nephew's embarrassments in a way that delighted her greatly, as it caused her to imagine she was confirming her dear Greville's hold on his rich uncle's affections, he spoke to her with the tenderness and solicitude of a proud father, rather than with an admirer's fervour, of her various high endowments and the brilliant career they could not fail to open to her if she persisted bravely in her several studies.

A connoisseur of music as well as of the fine arts, he assured her that the training of Italian masters would make her one of the finest singers—ay, *the first* female songstress of her generation. With her superb voice and marvellous dramatic genius, she might reasonably cherish the high ambition to win an historic place amongst the performers of opera. All that she needed for the achievement of so dazzling a destiny was to have the best instruction, and live for a while in the inspiring atmosphere of classic Italy. That instruction she should have, if she could induce Charles to bring her for twelve months to Naples, where they would live with him, to his inexpressible gratification,—Greville enlarging his knowledge of the Italian painters and sculptors, whilst she would be rising daily to higher vocal proficiency. They would live more cheaply in Italy than England. But there was no financial question to be considered in connection with this delightful project. The only question was, how Charles could relinquish his parliamentary duties and leave the

London coteries for a sufficient time without injury to his own career?

What could be kinder, more flattering, more intoxicating to a young woman in Emma's position than these proposals? No wonder she had the highest opinion of Sir William's beneficence! But had she suspected the hidden purpose of all these fair words, she would have risen to her fullest height, and poured torrents of indignant speech down on the dear, good Pliny, whose face she kissed and covered with tears of gratitude, when he bade her farewell on the day of his departure for Naples.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM LONDON TO NAPLES.

The Blot on Nelson's Fame—Another erroneous Story—Negotiations between Mr. Greville and Sir William Hamilton—Particulars of Sir William's Action for his Nephew's Advantage—The Bond—The Letter of Promise—Mr. Greville's *previous* Request to be relieved of Emma—His Overtures for Marriage with the Honourable Henrietta Middleton—Her Marriage to another Suitor—Mr. Greville's various Motives—The secret Arrangement for the Transference of Emma—Her Loyalty to Mr. Greville—The Way in which the Arrangement was Carried out—Mr. Greville's Conduct—Its extenuating Circumstances—The Project for an immediate Settlement on Her—Mr. Gavin Hamilton—Emma at Naples.
1784—1786 A.D.

LIVING with the Honourable Charles Greville at Paddington Green till the March of 1786, on the footing that has been stated with sufficient clearness and precision, Emma started for Italy in that month, and before the end of the year was living at Naples on precisely the same footing with Mr. Greville's uncle, Sir William Hamilton. How did this come about? It is well that this question should at length be answered authoritatively, truthfully, and exactly. It will be for the advantage of a reputation far more valuable to the English people than the reputation of Lady Hamilton or any other Beauty of her period,

that this answer should be given. If Lady Hamilton was the wanton and essentially vicious creature that her severest judges have declared her; if she was the utterly worthless and wicked adventuress who figures in the current memoirs about her, Nelson must have known her to be so; and, if he knew her to be so, no pleading, however ingenious, can relieve him of the shame of admiring and worshipping a woman whom he knew to be supremely evil and abominable. The present writer's case is that, notwithstanding her several grave errors, Lady Hamilton was not the flagrantly vicious creature biography has declared her, and that the black blot put upon Nelson by *her* undiscerning historians, like all other unjust judgments that live and feed upon the misconceptions which gave them birth, perishes under the merciful light of truth.

The question has hitherto been answered by one or another of the several versions of the statement—that, finding his nephew encumbered with debts and in possession of a beautiful mistress to whom he was strongly attached, Sir William Hamilton offered to pay the debts, provided Mr. Greville surrendered the enchantress to his financial liberator; that the nephew, seeing no other way of escaping from his monetary embarrassments, assented reluctantly to his uncle's cruel and humiliating offer; and that, accommodating herself to the purchaser's wishes with characteristic shamelessness, the woman of no virtue passed, with alacrity and contentment, from the protector who was in poverty, to the protector who was rich and promised to keep her in luxury. After suggesting that

Sir William Hamilton may, notwithstanding all rumours to the contrary, 'have been ignorant of his nephew's connexion with Emma,' Pettigrew adds, 'But there have not been wanting reports that the condition of the engagement between Sir William and the lady was the payment of his nephew's debts.' By the able writer of the entertaining and very clever article on 'Emma, Lady Hamilton,' that appeared in the *Temple Bar* of October, 1884, it is said, 'In course of time, Greville was informed that, if he gave up all claim to Emma, his debts would be paid. He was not in a position to hesitate. A bargain was thereupon struck between uncle and nephew, whereby the former obtained Mrs. Hart, encumbered by her mother, while the latter started free from debt.' According to this clever writer,—who wrote so ably on matters about which he was insufficiently informed that it pains me to speak of his hitherto unavoidable mistakes,—this hard bargain was struck in, or a little sooner than, the spring of 1788. Pettigrew's account of the business and the *Temple Bar* writer's more ample and precise misstatement of the case are fair examples of the several different ways in which the same story has been told by scribes of the highest respectability.

Save that Mr. Greville was considerably in debt, and that his debts had something to do with his determination to cease living with Emma, there is scarcely any truth in the successive allegations of the story. Strictly speaking, Sir William cannot be said to have paid his nephew's debts. He certainly did not diminish his income during his life by paying

them. There was a re-arrangement of the debts (amounting apparently to less than £6,000), money being raised for the satisfaction of creditors who required immediate payment, but the money so raised was not provided by Sir William. It became part of a sum for which Mr. Greville remained, together with his uncle's security, responsible. In brief, there was an arrangement by which Mr. Greville was enabled to postpone the payment of his debts for a period, and in the meantime enjoy freedom from harassing applications respecting them. Certainly no hard terms were forced by Sir William Hamilton on his nephew and familiar friend, in respect to this business or any other business.

To place his nephew in easier circumstances, and to afford him a better chance of settling himself comfortably, Sir William Hamilton, *at his nephew's request*, consented to join as security in a bond which would enable Mr. Greville to make the already-mentioned arrangement. Besides promising to join in this bond, Sir William kept the promise, and by his last will, whilst bequeathing a life-interest in the Welsh estate, together with other property, to his favourite nephew (who was appointed sole executor of the will), empowered him to charge the said real estate with a sum not exceeding £6,000, in order to extinguish all obligations arising from the bond. Yet further, for his nephew's advantage, shortly after promising to become a party to this bond, Sir William Hamilton wrote his nephew a letter, which Mr. Greville was authorized to use at his discretion in any way that seemed to him likely to further any

steps he might take for settling himself suitably in wedlock. In this epistle, written in order that it should be shown in confidence to other persons, Sir William announced his intention of making the gentleman, to whom it was addressed, the heir in tail to his Welsh estate. To both these acts—‘the promise’ to join in the bond, and ‘the letter’ of promise to make him his heir—Sir William was moved by *his nephew’s words of petition*. Not only were the nephew’s two requests granted unconditionally, but they were granted with a delicacy and heartiness that drew from Mr. Greville expressions of the liveliest gratitude. Certainly Mr. Greville saw no reason to think himself hardly treated by his uncle.

It would be a mistake for readers to imagine that these concessions to his nephew’s wishes were made by the uncle in order to win an equivalent from Mr. Greville. For the nephew was not in a position to repay his uncle for such beneficence with anything but gratitude and zealous care for his various interests in Great Britain. He certainly was not in a position to make a virtue of surrendering Emma to his benefactor. For months, several months, before he asked his uncle to join in the bond and write ‘the letter,’ he had entreated his uncle to take Emma off his hands at the first convenient opportunity,—this singular entreaty being accompanied with an incomplete statement of the several considerations which moved him to make so extraordinary a request. It is true that this request had been preceded by an offer from Sir William to take Emma off his nephew’s hands, should the latter be compelled to break up

his establishment, and part with 'the fair tea-maker.' If the 'request' should be regarded as the result of this previous 'offer,' it may be stated confidently that Sir William did not make the offer without knowing it would cause his nephew neither offence nor any other kind of pain. These certain facts dispose of the preposterous statement that the rich uncle wrested Emma from the needy nephew by a minatory and contingent offer to pay his debts.

By a few persons of the small circle who were admitted to Mr. Greville's privacy at Paddington, and had opportunities of observing his intercourse with Emma, it was thought more than probable that he would eventually marry the lovely girl, who had been an object of his compassion, and was more and more the object of his tender admiration. At times these few persons were confident that he would make her his wife, after educating her up to his ideal of feminine intellectuality and refinement. And beauty and compassion being both akin to love, it is conceivable there were moments when the gentleman allowed so romantic a project to occupy his fancy. But I have grounds for a strong opinion that the notion of marrying Emma, if he ever entertained it, never held his mind for long. Though he had not hitherto been remarkable for prudence, Mr. Greville was by no means without concern for his own interest. In speaking of his involvements and prospects, he remarked to a friend, who had his confidence, 'I have no alternative but to marry or remain a pauper.' He felt that, if he persisted in it for many years, his way of living with Emma would result more or less in

social seclusion, differing in no great degree from social isolation. An aristocrat, he saw he could not wed Emma without 'losing caste.'

Moreover, although he averred, so late as the March of 1785, that, in his general view of marriageable womankind, he had no especial desire for any particular lady, it is certain that Mr. Greville had for several years regarded a certain family and a certain fair member of it with sentiments of peculiar approval. Whilst a householder in Portman Square, he was next-door neighbour to Henry, the 5th Baron Middleton, a nobleman with three children, by his wife Dorothy, daughter and co-heir of George Cartwright, Esq., of Ossington, Notts. Lord Middleton was wealthy and of good name in 'society'; and Mr. Greville was on the friendliest terms with Lady Middleton and her children, as well as with her lord. It was understood in 'society' that each of Lady Middleton's two daughters had a fortune of £30,000. There was the usual element of exaggeration in this understanding; for, on enquiring into the matter, Mr. Greville ascertained that the fortune of each of the young ladies was £20,000. Towards the close of 1784, when Sir William Hamilton had recently left England for another term of residence at Naples, the elder of these ladies, the Honourable Dorothy Middleton, was married (November 24, 1784) to Richard Langley, Esq., of Wykeham Abbey. Possibly this lady's marriage to a country squire was regarded by Mr. Greville as an indication that an Earl's younger son, albeit a poor younger son, might presume to ask Lord and Lady Middleton to regard him as a suitable

match for their younger daughter. Still Mr. Greville was uneasy on thinking what he should say of his pecuniary prospect, respecting which Lord Middleton would require some information.

Thinking it would relieve him of this uneasiness, and strongly commend his position to Lord Middleton's respectful consideration, to give the nobleman conclusive evidence of Sir William Hamilton's affectionate regard for him, Mr. Greville asked his uncle for 'the letter,' of which mention has been made. On receiving this letter, which made a far larger promise of testamentary advantage than aught the nephew had hoped, or at least had ventured to ask, of his uncle's goodness, Mr. Greville lost no time in transmitting it to Lord Middleton, together with his prayer for permission to pay his addresses to Miss Henrietta Middleton. All this took place whilst Mr. Greville was living with Emma, within a few hundred yards of Lord Middleton's town-house, and whilst, according to the biographers, he was thinking of marrying the young person who, six years later, became his aunt.

How Lord Middleton, who can scarcely have been unaware of the applicant's association with Romney's 'divine lady,' replied to Mr. Greville's petition, does not appear. If his lordship hinted that the petition was somewhat premature, and had better be deferred till the writer could with greater propriety approach Miss Henrietta on so delicate a subject, the reply must have confirmed Mr. Greville in his opinion that his entanglement with Emma was doing him harm. Possibly Mr. Greville was encouraged by Lord Middle-

ton's response to make an offer that was declined by the Honourable Henrietta Middleton. Anyhow, the affair came to nothing, and two years later (1787) the lady gave her hand and heart to Richard, 6th Earl of Scarborough.

In pressing Sir William Hamilton to take Emma off his hands, Mr. Greville addressed his uncle with a freedom that is astounding, even when all the circumstances of the curious case are taken into consideration, but would be almost incredible to readers not fully informed of the close intimacy of the two near relations, who had for years communicated with one another, as far as possible, on terms of equality. By his nephew the uncle was assured that he would be far happier with so lovely and unexceptionable a mistress as Emma than with a second wife,—to whom he would be so fettered that, in case he did not like her after trial, he could not readily get quit of her. Sir William was assured that in this opinion his favourite nephew had the support of all the most sensible and influential members both of the Hamilton 'connection' and the Greville 'connection.' Only the other day Sir William's one remaining brother—the Reverend Frederic Hamilton, vicar of Wellingborough—had spoken his mind freely on the subject, and declared that 'the wisest thing' his brother William could do 'would be to buy love ready made.'

Of the several motives he had for wishing to be quit of Emma, Mr. Greville spoke to his uncle largely and precisely, but with two or three important reservations. Declaring that he was not tired of Emma,

who was daily growing lovelier, cleverer, more fascinating, sweeter-tempered, he averred he saw not a single fault in her apart from the failings due to the defectiveness of her early education. She was truthful as the sunlight, and no less good than beautiful. Wholly superior to avarice, she was free from every kind of selfishness. Possessing a fine taste for the fine arts, and unusual powers of mind, she was indifferent to the pleasures that were especially attractive to the majority of handsome women, and would never pine for frivolous gaiety, so long as she had the usual diversions of a quiet and cheerful home. But she was a luxury in which he could no longer indulge. It was needful that he should marry in his own class, and with due care for his pecuniary welfare. To do this, he must part with altogether the most interesting object of all his 'collection.' As he must part with this exemplary creature, he wished to see her in the hands of a man of the highest refinement and the nicest sense of honour, who would appreciate her at her full worth, and, treating her in accordance with her rare merits, would be in every way good to her. It would be selfishness in him and cruelty to Emma for him, a needy man, to retain her any longer in a condition of comparative poverty, when she was entitled by her extraordinary endowments to a much brighter lot.

All this, and much more to the same purpose, Mr. Greville urged upon his uncle. But, whilst thus communicative, he was careful not to say that his own self-interest had much to do with his strong desire that, instead of making a second marriage, his

uncle should do 'the other thing.' Nor did Mr. Greville trouble himself to say that one of his chief reasons for thinking Emma would be the best possible mistress for Sir William Hamilton was his confidence that, in memory of kindness shown her by the man who had rescued her from speedy ruin, so grateful, and staunch, and loyal-hearted a girl would do nothing to lower him in his uncle's regard, but, on the contrary, would use all her tact and cleverness to stimulate and strengthen Sir William's affection for him. That Mr. Greville was certain that, even when he should have given her good grounds for remembering him with indignation and disdain, Emma would be thus true to him, shows what a high opinion he had of her generosity.

Sir William Hamilton having agreed to take over his nephew's mistress, it became an affair of debate with the two conspirators how Emma should be induced to consent to the arrangement they had made for her. To both conspirators it was manifest that her consent would not be easily obtained. It was known to both the uncle and the nephew that in her strong attachment to the latter the lovely girl had baffled several attempts to lure her from Edgware Row. Mr. Willoughby, a gentleman of high breeding and great wealth, had assailed her fidelity to Mr. Greville with prodigal offers. If she would come to him, Mr. Willoughby had promised to give her a grand mansion in the best part of town, a carriage, a stable of horses, liveried servants, diamonds, and an allowance for pin-money that would enable her to dress like a duchess. Rejecting scornfully these

proffers by Mr. Willoughby, who wished for her only as a mistress, she told Mr. Greville of the rich man's proposals, and averred that, were she constrained to leave her present protector, she would never place herself under another man's authority until he had married her, and would never marry any man whom she did not love. Whilst living in Paddington Green, she had also declined two fairly good offers of marriage from men of position and character, declaring that she would never leave her dear Greville, her benefactor, her rescuer from ruin, till he should dismiss her, which he could do at any moment by a mere look, should he ever grow weary of her. The girl, who had given these proofs of the strength and disinterestedness of her attachment to her comparatively needy protector, was no girl to be easily passed on from one owner to another.

It was clear to both conspirators that the girl must be brought out of England and taken to Naples, under circumstances that would not give her the faintest suspicion of the real purpose of the journey. She must be induced to pass from England to Italy, in the belief that she was going to southern Europe solely for her education in music and singing, and for the good she might do her 'dear Greville,' by planting him more deeply and firmly than ever in his uncle's affection. It would not do for Mr. Greville to accompany her to the south of Europe; for, if he attended her thither, she would want to return with him, and there would be hysterical 'scenes' at Naples, when, in his absence, she would be falling into the routine of study and lessons, that would make her

content to stay in Italy without him. The parting between him and her must take place in England, and must be effected in such a way that she would not suspect it was a 'final parting.' The faintest suspicion of the arrangement for shifting her from one keeper to another would whip her to quick mutiny, and cause her to leap from mutiny to madness. In her madness she might do some wild deed, by which she would be lost to both uncle and nephew for ever. She must be lured into leaving England with her mother, under the escort of some sufficient voyager, who would see them through the difficulties of the tedious journey.

By the conspirators it was arranged, so early as July, 1785, that towards the close of the year Emma should receive from Sir William Hamilton a letter, inviting her to come out to Naples for instruction in music and the other advantages of foreign travel and residence under the southern sky, in accordance with the verbal invitation given to her in the autumn of 1784. In one respect only should the written words differ from the verbal invitation. The writer must say—that, of course, during her dear Greville's time of particular negotiations with his creditors it would be impossible for him to accompany her; but that he would follow her to Italy, at any interval of six or nine months, towards the close of her course of musical instruction, and at the end of the course take her back to England with him. In anticipation of this letter, Mr. Greville would tell her that his financial troubles were growing and thickening upon him so fast that, though they might go on living together

at Paddington Green till the end of the year, and even for a few weeks into the New Year, it would then be necessary for them to live apart for a brief term, for ends of economy. On the arrival of the letter from Italy, Mr. Greville, averring that the invitation had arrived at an opportune moment, would urge her to accept it, not only in her own interest, but for *his* sake.

This arrangement was carried out. On the arrival of the invitation, Mr. Greville affected to receive it as a welcome solution of his most urgent difficulties. Saying how right Sir William was in representing to her that he (Greville) could not leave Great Britain, when by doing so he should seem to be flying from his creditors, Mr. Greville explained to Emma the arrangement which, with his dear uncle's generous aid, he was even then making for the satisfaction of the people to whom he owed money. He was in negociation with a man of business, who would provide the money for the immediate payment of all his creditors, with the exception of two or three chief creditors, who would defer their claims for an indefinite period, on sufficient security being given for their eventual payment, and also with the exception of the few tradesmen, in and about the Edgware Road, for the settlement of whose petty bills he should provide enough money, by selling two or three pictures. During these negociations,—for the whole business was an affair of several negociations,—it was incumbent on his honour that he should live with a show of the strictest economy, and should not go out of the kingdom. His uncle, who of course knew

the precise state of his affairs, and had been prodigiously good to him in promising to join in the bond, knew what a relief it would be to him were she taken off his hands for a few months, on terms that would be extremely advantageous to her. She would, Mr. Greville urged, seem to his uncle ungracious and ungrateful, if she refused this invitation, which had been written in so kindly and sympathetic a vein, from the most generous motives.

Mr. Greville went on to say that, whilst she would pain Sir William Hamilton by showing reluctance to profit by his kindness, Emma, in proportion to the pain she gave him, would injure his nephew. On the other hand, by going out to Sir William with a display of gladness and alacrity, she might do her 'dear Greville' good service. Sir William had just done him a very great kindness,—indeed, had put him under very heavy obligation. It was wholly due to Sir William's goodness, that he saw the way to a satisfactory arrangement with his creditors. In plain truth, Sir William had practically taken on himself the main body of the debts, by undertaking that they should be paid out of his estate after his death, unless the debtor could pay them sooner. So great an act of generosity might possibly be followed by a reaction of feeling against the object of such munificence. The reaction was almost certain to ensue, if Emma declined the invitation; for, in his annoyance, Sir William would not fail to attribute her refusal to his nephew's influence. On the other hand, by going out to Sir William, and behaving in her prettiest way to him, she would not only prevent the reaction, but

would quicken Sir William's affectionate concern for her Greville. It was, therefore, of the highest moment to him that she should be at Naples, guarding and nursing his interests there.

On seeing, or rather on being made to imagine, that she could be of service to her beloved Mr. Greville at Naples, Emma at once consented to go thither, as soon as the time should be fixed and the escort provided. Rewarding her for this acquiescence by calling her a brave girl and a good girl, Mr. Greville reminded her how short the time was during which they would be separated. Nine months (perhaps they would be only six months) would quickly pass, and then, as soon as parliament rose, he should be wending his way to delightful Italy, to take her in his arms, and marvel at the improvement of her voice, and at the fluency of her Italian.

But, asked Emma, what would he do in London without her?—a question to which Mr. Greville replied by saying, that he should be as little as possible in London, which, in her absence, would be a dull, dreary, and sorely depressing place to him. Though he could not leave Great Britain with propriety, there was no reason why he should stay in London, where everything would whet his desire to see her again, and make him fret at his severance from her. As soon as she had started for Italy, he should be off to Scotland. Telling his man of business where he was to be found, he should go to Edinburgh, and, living on two or three pounds a-week, attend Professor Black's chemical lectures,—and there he should remain, reading hard and working hard at chemistry,

till 'a call of the House' should compel him to move back to London, and show himself at Westminster.

Emma still had some time in which to prepare her mind for the separation, which, though she was assured it would be for only six or nine months, was so distasteful to her that she could not for a moment have contemplated it with calmness, had she not been induced to think that, by leaving him for a while, and going to Naples in accordance with his request, and doing there what he asked of her, she would be rendering good service to the interests of the man whom she loved completely. By no one, who has carefully studied the documents which the present writer has perused, and re-perused, for the purpose of this work, can it be questioned that, though only a mistress, she loved Mr. Greville with a love that, in its purity and devotion, would have befitted her had she been his wife. During the interval, between her acceptance of Sir William Hamilton's invitation and the day on which she started on her journey to Naples, she was often in tears, and possessed by melancholy, darker and deeper than the sadness that had preyed upon her in the black time of the Christmas and New Year of 1781—2. There were moments when she was visited by forebodings of disaster, and a presentiment that the dreadful separation would be for ever. It was all very well for Mr. Greville to speak of six months, and even of nine months, as a short time! Had she not found five weeks a dreary long time, when required to spend them at a watering-place, far away from her dearest friend? Anyhow, six months were long enough to cover the

single day in which he might die. If he fell ill in London during those fearful months, he might die, and be buried, ere ever the news of his illness would reach her at Naples. But, for *his sake*, she had promised to go to Naples; and she was not the girl to draw back in terror, and break her promise to the man who had been so good to her.

She had not the faintest suspicion, nor the faintest glimmer of a conception, of the real purpose for which she was being sent out of her native country to a far distant land.

But, in justice to Mr. Greville, who shows badly in this hideous business, let it be said that even at this moment he was by no means indifferent to the welfare and what he deemed the real interest of the unutterably beautiful girl, to whom he had from various motives (some of them greatly creditable to his humanity) acted with beneficence. Finding her an outcast, he had sheltered her; taking her to his care when she was sick, he had ministered to her needs; snatching her from the jaws of ruin, he had recovered her to sanity and self-respect; commiserating her for the defects of her early training, he had given her the highest mental education of which she was susceptible. No doubt the way in which he lived with her was in one of its respects a wrong way; but, instead of deteriorating in any particular, her several fine moral endowments—her truthfulness, honesty, unselfishness, generosity—had become more conspicuous. In winning her heart, he never seems to have employed ignoble artifice. Promising her sympathetic consideration, tender nurture, and admira-

tion, he gave her all three in liberal measure ; but, so far as I can learn from manifold sources of information, he never promised her any warmer regard than friendship. He never uttered a syllable with the intention of making her hope that he would some day marry her. And now, in passing her on to another proprietor, without obtaining her consent to the transference, and without even letting her know what was being done for her future, he sincerely thought—and had reasons for thinking—that he was promoting her worldly fortunes. If he was acting for his own private interest, he at the same time had no doubt that he was acting also for her advantage, in giving his friend Hamilton a good chance of winning her love. Knowing him to be a man of the highest conventional honour, he was confident Sir William Hamilton would treat her kindly.

Moreover, in fairness to Mr. Greville (whose morality was the mere fruit of custom and social sentiment, though natural delicacy and artificial refinement had combined to render him averse to coarse profligacy), it should be recorded that, in preparing to part with Emma, he wished to give her a degree of material independence that would be favourable to her future happiness and goodness. Asking Sir William Hamilton to endow her at once with an annuity of £100 (a request to which Sir William readily acceded), Mr. Greville, poor though he was, declared his intention to raise by another sale of pictures and *virtu* a sufficient sum for the purchase of another, though perhaps somewhat smaller, annuity for her advantage. It was designed by Mr. Greville

that these annuities should be secured to Emma by a legal deed, and that Romney should be asked to act as her trustee in respect to them. I cannot say positively that this project was *not* carried into execution. But I have strong grounds for thinking that the arrangement (which certainly was still only a project when Emma went out to Italy) was never carried into effect. None the less certain, however, is it that Mr. Greville was desirous of compassing the settlement for Emma's advantage.

In the February of 1786, it was decided that Emma should start for the South of Europe on the 1st of the next month; but almost at the last moment the day of outset was postponed for a fortnight in order that she and her mother should travel as far as Rome under the escort of Mr. Gavin Hamilton, the painter, who is best remembered at the present day for his paintings of Homeric subjects. On seeing Emma for the first time in the previous January, when he dined with her and Mr. Greville at Paddington Green, this artist (who was, by the way, one of Sir William Hamilton's numerous artistic *protégés*) regarded her with the astonishment and delight of admiration. Telling Mr. Greville that he had never seen anyone like her in Great Britain, but was reminded by her of a less perfect Beauty, whom he had worshipped in Rome, Mr. Hamilton thought Emma's 'beautiful and uncommon mouth' was, perhaps, the most distinctive of her facial charms.

On Tuesday, the 14th of March, Emma and Mrs. Cadogan were confided to the painter, who had under-

taken to be their escort to Rome. Readers have already been told that Emma arrived at Naples on the 26th of April, 1786,—that day being, by my computation, the 23rd anniversary of her birthday.

CHAPTER IX.

SENSATION IN NAPLES.

Emma's Appearance in 1786—Period of her Beauty's Perfection—Length of her auburn Tresses—Her Reception at Naples—Sir William's Presents to Emma—Her Carriage and Servants—Her Boat and liveried Boatmen—She begs Sir William to send Money to Mr. Greville—She pines for her Benefactor in London—She is sensible of Sir William's Passion—Her Frankness to Mr. Greville—Her Pathetic Letters to Him—Her first Alarm—She implores Mr. Greville to keep his Promise—His Silence to her Fourteen Letters—Progress of her Education—Sensation caused by her Beauty at Naples—Princes and Nobles in her Train—The King's Gallantry to Her—Steadiness of her Affection for Mr. Greville—At gay Naples she pines for foggy London—What She has been told to do—Her fifteenth Letter to Mr. Greville.

1786 A.D.

WHEN Emma made her first journey to Italy, some years had to pass before her beauty came to its perfection. She was still a lithe, lissom, agile, slim girl, with a waist none too small for health and classic grace, but looking somewhat less than its actual girth, by reason of the boldness of her figure's upper and lower contours, which even in the season of her bodily slightness betokened that in middle age her figure would be less remarkable for elegance than for stately dignity. The period of her beauty's perfection did not much exceed five years. Beginning

in 1791, shortly before she gave the latest sittings to Romney, it lasted to the close of 1796, when she fattened with ominous rapidity, and continued to do so till she acquired the *embonpoint* of which Mrs. Trench (who disliked Nelson's enchantress) has given a portrait somewhat charged with caricature.

But how she looked at the dawn of the nineteenth century is a matter to be considered by-and-by. For the present, readers must think of her as the slight, lithe girl whose 'beautiful and uncommon mouth' struck Gavin Hamilton as perhaps the most remarkable of all her facial attractions,—the girl whose profusion of auburn hair, on being 'let down,' used to drop even to her feet. Some biographers have preferred to speak of her chesnut hair; but in doing so they were thinking of the deepest colour of the chesnut's rind,—of a deep brown, toned with scarcely perceptible redness. Though they lacked the feathery softness of the Byronic curls, Emma's tresses in their colour resembled Byron's hair so closely that three inches snipped from the end of one of her ringlets might be used to give greater volume to a relic taken from the poet's head. Sir William Hamilton used to speak of Emma as sitting or going about *in* her hair; and he might well talk of it as a costume, for at Naples she sometimes went to water-parties and garden-parties with the ends of her long tresses playing about her heels.

Had Emma been the heiress to a coronet, and Mrs. Cadogan a peeress in her own right, they would not have been received with a greater show of deference and *empressement* by Sir William Hamilton. Taking

them to his own home, he lodged them for a few days in the stateliest apartment of the British embassy, whilst workmen were putting the last touches of re-decoration and equipment to the apartment of four rooms opposite the sea, which he had taken for their home. From an early day of her first sojourn at Naples, Emma had a carriage and servants at her command,—but *not* a carriage with Sir William Hamilton's arms on its panels, and with servants in his livery; it having occurred to Sir William that, if she were seen thus early driving about Naples in his well-known carriage, premature rumours and inconvenient misconceptions would arise in the Neapolitan coteries. Emma was told by her considerate patron that in a few days she would be the mistress of the handsome English carriage (heretofore used by Mrs. Damer), that had not yet returned from the coach-builder, to whom it had been sent for thorough renovation. This vehicle would not have Sir William's heraldic blazonery on the panels; and its servants would wear liveries that would not cause casual observers to associate the vehicle's habitual occupants with the British ambassador. Whilst this equipage was being prepared for the ladies, Sir Thomas Rumbold took them for daily drives in his phaeton. At the same time, a boat, that would be manned by boatmen in *their* livery, was being re-fitted and re-decorated for Mrs. Cadogan and her daughter.

Sir William poured presents on the girl,—some of them being costly gifts, whilst the other offerings were more expressive of the donor's respect for his *protégée*, though of less value. He gave her a 'camel-

shawl,' a satin gown worth twenty-five guineas, and several trifles, which he was careful to tell her had formerly belonged to his wife. Muslin dresses of Turkish fashion, made loose, with sleeves tied in folds with ribbon, and trimmed with lace, were ordered for her; which dresses, she was assured, would prove the fittest apparel for her in the hot weather. In short (to use the words of Emma's letter to Mr. Greville), Sir William was 'always contriving what he should get for her.' Raining gifts down upon her, he was no less lavish of fair speeches and flattery. Nor was Sir William her only flatterer. 'The people,' she wrote to Mr. Greville, 'admire my English dresses. But the blue hat, Greville, pleases most. Sir William is quite enchanted with it.'

Other things were done for the girl's gratification by her host. Tears of joy and gratitude rose in her blue eyes, when he told her that, in his love for her dear Greville, he had recently made a will, leaving all his property to his favourite nephew;—a piece of information that caused the emotional and impulsive Emma to entreat Sir William to send her dear Greville some money at once, as she knew how sorely he needed it. 'Pray, my dear Greville,' the girl wrote to the holder of her heart, 'do write me word, if you want any money. I am afraid I distressed you. But I am sure Sir William will send you some; and I told him he must help you, and send you some for your journey; and he kissed me, and the tears came into his eyes, and he told me I might command anything, for he loved us both dearly.'

But all these reasons for contentment notwith-

standing, Emma was far from happy during her first days at Naples. She was so far, so very far away from the man she loved. As she drove into Naples, she wept to think it was her birthday, to remember the happy birthdays she had spent at the dear home near Edgware Road, to recall how good Mr. Greville used to be to her on those days,—how it was his practice to ‘stay at home, and be kind to her,’ that is to say, kinder than ever to her, on the anniversaries of her birthday. Travelling from England much slower than the post, she had hoped to find a letter from Mr. Greville waiting for her arrival under Sir William’s roof. But there was no letter. Nor did any letter come to her from him on subsequent days. He seemed to have forgotten all about her birthday. Moreover, she was greatly troubled by something in Sir William’s demeanour to her. It was not that he talked so much about her beauty to his friends in her presence. She liked to be praised and stared at for her beauty. She had been educated at Paddington Green, and in Mr. Romney’s studio, to enjoy it. As Mr. Greville had been in the habit of speaking to his friends in her presence about the delicious colour of her hair, the whiteness and evenness of her teeth, the classic art with which her head was put on her neck, the absolutely unique beauty of her mouth, it seemed to her a mere matter of course that Sir William Hamilton should entertain his friends in the same way. No measure, however excessive, of Sir William’s admiration would have been too much for her, had it been mere admiration,—such enthusiastic approval, indeed, as would have justified her in rating

him as one of the numerous regiment of worshippers whom she styled her 'lovers,'—but only in the sense that they were her right worshipful admirers. From dear Sir William that sort of love would have been delightful to Emma. But from the first hour she spent with him in Naples, she saw, would have been blind not to see, that he loved her in another way,—loved her with a *passion* that might declare itself in a verbal offer at any moment. What should she do?

Answering the question in the very best way, she decided to write frankly on the matter to her dear Mr. Greville in the very first letter she should send him from Naples, and to show him precisely, and without delay, in what an embarrassing position she found herself. Written to the end of the last paragraph but one, on Sunday, the 30th of April, 1786, this letter was finished in a panic on the following day. In the earlier and main part of the epistle, when she could rest on Mr. Greville's promise to come to her in the following September or October, Emma wrote clearly, but without excessive agitation, of the manifest nature of Sir William's regard for her. The concluding paragraph, written on May Day, 1786, was penned in the highest excitement, soon after the conversation with Sir William that 'had made her mad.' In the course of that conversation, Sir William Hamilton had told her that he knew nothing of his nephew's purpose to come to Naples in the autumn. Certainly (the uncle averred) Mr. Greville had never, either in plain words or even by a hint, announced any such intention. Naturally, Emma was surprised. Was it, she asked herself, conceivable that the good

Mr. Greville had induced her to go to Italy by a promise which he had no intention of keeping, even at the very moment of making it? But the post would soon be going with the letters. Emma could only lengthen her epistle by the single hasty paragraph, which contains the prayer, 'Only, Greville, remember your promise of October.'

From Emma to the Hon. Charles Greville.

'Naples: April the 30th, 1786.

'MY DEAREST GREVILLE,

'I arrived at this place on the 26th, and I should have begun to write sooner, but the post does not go till to-morrow, and I dreaded setting down to write, for I try to appear as chearful before Sir William as I could, and I am sure to cry the moment I think of you. For I feel more and more unhappy at being separated from you, and, if my fatal ruin depends on seeing you, I will and must [see you] in the end of the summer. For to live without you is imposible. I love you to that degree, that at this time there is not a hardship upon hearth, either of poverty, hunger, cold death, or even to walk* barefooted to Scotland to see you, but what I would undergo. Therefore, my dear, dear Greville, if you do love me, for my sake try all you can to come hear as soon as possible. You have a true friend in Sir William, and he will be happy to see you, and do all he can, to make you happy; and for me, I will be everything you can wish for. I find it is not either a fine horse, or a fine coach, or a pack of servants, or plays or operas can make happy. It is you that [h]as it in your power either to make me very happy or very miserable. I respect Sir William, I have a great regard for him, as the uncle and friend of you, and he loves me, Greville. But he can never be anything nearer to me than your uncle and my sincere friend. He never can be my lover.

* Note this talk about 'walking barefooted to Scotland.' It indicates that she then thought of him as having acted on his design to study chemistry in the northern capital.

‘ You do not know how good Sir William is to me. He is doing everything he can to make me happy. He [h]as never dined out since I came hear; and endead, to speake the truth, he is never out of my sight. He breakfasts, dines, supes, and is constantly by me, looking in my face. I cant stir a hand, leg, or foot; but he is marking [it] as graceful and fine; and I am sorry to say it, he loves me now, as much as ever he could Lady Bolingbroke. Endead, I am sorry, for I cannot make him happy. I can be civil, oblidging, and I do try to make myself as agreable as I can to him. But I belong to you, Greville, and to you only I will belong, and nobody shall be your heir-apearant. You do not know how glad I was to arrive hear the day I did. It was my birthday, and I was very low-spirited. Oh God! that day that you used to smile on me, and stay at home, and be kind to me,—that [on] *that* day I should be at such a distance from you! But my comfort is, I rely upon your promise, and September or October I shall see you. But I am quite unhappy at not hearing from you;—no letter for me yet, Greville! But I must wait with patience. We have had company [al]most every day since I came:—some of Sir William’s friends. The[y] are all very much pleased with me; and poor Sir William is never so happy as when he is pointing out my beauties to them. He thinks I am grown much more [h]ansome then I was. He does nothing all day but look at me and sigh. Yes, last night we had a little concert. But then I was so low, for I wanted you to partake of our amusement. Sir Thomas Rumbold is hear with [h]is son, who is dying of a decline. It is a son he had by his first wife; and, poor young man! he canot walk from the bed to the chair; and Lady Rumbold, like a tender-hearted wretch, is gone to Rome, to pass her time there with the English, and [h]as took the coach and all the English servants with her, and left poor Sir Thomas hear with [h]is heart broken, waiting on [h]is sick son. You can’t think what a worthy man he is. He din’d with ous, and likes me very much, and every day [h]as brought [h]is carridge or phaeton, which he [h]as bought hear, and carries me and mother and Sir William out, and shows ous a deal of civilities; for you are to understand I have a carridge of Sir William’s, a English one, painting, and new liverys, and

new coachman and footman, &c.—the same as Mrs. Damer had of her own, for she did not go with [h]is. For if I was going about in [h]is carriage, the[y] would say I was either his wife or mistress. Theirfore as I am not nor ever can be either, we have made a very good establishment. I have a very good apartment of 4 rooms, very pleasant-looking to the sea. Our boat comes out to-day for the first time, and we shall [be]gin to bathe in a day or two, and we are going for one day or two to Caserta. I was at Paysilipo yesterday. I think it a very pretty place.

‘Sir William [h]as give me a camel-shawl like my old one. I know you will be pleased to hear that, and he [h]as given me a beautiful gown cost 25 guineas (India painting on wite sattin), and several little things of Lady Hamilton’s, and is going to by me some muslin dresses loose, to tye with a sash, for the hot weather,—made like the turkey dresses, the sleeves tyed in fowlds with ribban and trimd with lace. In short, he is always contriving what he shall get for me. The people admire my English dresses. But the blue hat, Greville, pleases most. Sir William is quite enchanted with it. Oh, how he loves you! He told me he had made [h]is will, and left you everything belonging to him. That made me very happy for your sake. Pray, my dear Greville, do write me word, if you want any money. I am affraid I distressed you. But I am sure Sir William will send you some, and I told him he must help you a little now, and send you some for your jurney hear, and he kissed me, and the tears came into [h]is eyes, and he told me I might comand anything, for he loved ous boath dearly; and, oh! how [happy] shall I be, when I can once more see you, my dear, dear Greville. You are everything that is dear to me on hearth, and I hope happier times will soon restore you to me, for endead I would rather be with you starving then from you in the greatest splendor in the world.

‘I have only to say I enclose this [which] I wrote yesterday, and I will not venture myself now to wright any more, for my mind and heart are torn by different passions, that I shall go mad. Only, Greville, remember your promise of October. Sir William says you never mentioned to him about coming to Naples at all. But you know the consequence of your not coming for me. Endead, my dear

Greville, I live but in the hope of seeing you, and if you do not come hear, lett whatt will be the consequence, I will come to England. I have had a conversation this morning with Sir William, that has made me mad. He speaks—no, I do not know what to make of it. But, Greville, my dear Greville, wright some comfort to me. But onely remember, you will never be loved by anybody like

‘Your affectionate and sincere,

‘EMMA.

‘P.S.—Pray, for God’s sake, wright to me and come to me, for Sir William shall not be anything to me but your friend.’

To this frank, simple, touching letter Mr. Greville made no reply. She wrote him other letters, imploring comfort and counsel, declaring she could never love any other man, entreating him to say if she had done anything to offend him, and, in case she had caused him displeasure, to forgive the fault that had been committed unintentionally. But he replied to only one of her letters. In all she wrote and sent to him from Naples fourteen letters between the 14th of March and the 19th of July, 1786, fourteen letters in the same number of weeks. Some of these entreaties for further guidance must have wrung the heart of the far from unfeeling man, who had guided and guarded her for more than four years. But the beneficent protector, to whom she had been ‘a good girl,’ was now almost as silent as the protector to whom she was ‘a bad girl,’ had been silent in the winter of 1781—2. From the 14th of March till at least as late as the end of July, she received only one letter from him. That one letter has not come to my hands. Nor is there aught in any of her letters

which have come to my hands, enabling me to declare positively what he said to her in the one epistle. The man who had guided her so long meant to guide her no longer, and felt that by answering her letters he should only render it more difficult for Sir William Hamilton to get his way with her. During the same time he seems to have been no less silent to his uncle. Anyhow, to her frequent inquiries whether he had heard from her dear Greville, Sir William answered in the negative, and averred he was totally unable to account for his nephew's neglect to write to him.

In the meantime, with the patience and zeal of a suitor set on achieving his purpose, and confident of achieving it eventually, Sir William Hamilton persisted in his kindness and deferential homage to the girl, whom he prized all the more because he found it so very difficult to win her. Knowing the advantage he was sure of gaining in a few months from Mr. Greville's neglect, he did everything to make the girl feel that he had not lured her to Italy on a false pretence of care for her progress in accomplishments, even if Mr. Greville had put her from him with duplicity. Emma having come to Italy at least in some degree for the educational advantages which he had promised her, Sir William was at pains to be even better than his word on this point. His *protégée* had the best language-master in Naples to teach her Italian, the best singing-master in Naples to train her voice, the best music-master in Naples to make her a better pianist; and with characteristic energy and resoluteness she threw herself into her various studies, with results that astonished her preceptors,

and caused Sir William to proclaim her a miracle of cleverness and capacity. At the same time she spent several hours of each day in pleasant drives, boating, bathing, and the diversions of sight-seeing. Going much into society,—for Sir William was rich in friends, and had taken precautions that at least during the earlier months of her stay at Naples there should be no rumours to her discredit,—she shone in brighter circles than any to which she was admitted in England.

In London, where her position was known to everyone who was cognizant of her existence, she had necessarily been ‘out of the world.’ At Naples she was ‘in the world,’ and wherever she went she breathed the incense of flattery. Princes and nobles bowed low to her in the gardens of the Villa Reale. It was no vain and baseless fancy of her brain that King Ferdinand admired her, and that she already had the approval of Queen Maria Caroline, to whom, however, she was not ‘introduced’ till she had become the British Minister’s wife. Ferdinand’s admiration of the new Beauty from England had caused gossip in the gardens of the Villa Reale and at the Opera, before he paid her the great compliment at Posilipo that set all Naples chattering. It was the King’s use in the summer of 1786 to dine on Sundays at Posilipo, and the courtiers knew that on these occasions he went before the Casino in his boat for no other purpose than to get a view of the English girl, whose face was said to resemble in so marvellous a degree one of the finest paintings of the Holy Virgin. One Sunday, the King in his boat of musicians and courtiers found himself bearing down on the vessel

in which the object of his admiration had been sailing, in the company of Sir William Hamilton and a party of his diplomatic friends. Seeing his good fortune and opportunity, the king caused his barge to be brought alongside Emma's craft, and ordered all the French horns and the whole band to play their best, in honour of the lovely Lady. Taking off his hat, the sovereign sate with bare head as long as the music lasted, and then, as he stept ashore, made the Lady a profound obeisance, declaring in Italian, as he did so, that he was a sinner for not being able to speak English. Knowing how greatly His Majesty was smitten with the Beauty, of whom everyone was talking, Maria Caroline is said to have taken occasion for expressing her approval of the simplicity and discretion with which Emma was reported to acknowledge the King's courtesies.

Whilst Mrs. Cadogan's daughter was thus famous at the Court, and the rage of the whole capital, from the Princes who followed in her train to the Lazzaroni who thronged about her carriage, whenever they saw it stop in a public place, artists vied with one another for the honour of painting her portrait. Towards the close of July, 1786, whilst Marchmont was cutting her profile in cameo for a ring, she was being painted in turban and Turkish dress by one limner, whilst another artist was painting her in a blue gown, with black hat and white feathers. At the same time, she was looking forward to be painted by two other Italian artists, as soon as the two painters-in-possession should have done with her, and by Angelica Kaufmann, *if* she should come to Naples.

Had she in her earlier time been the light, shallow, unsteady, fickle-hearted, if not altogether heartless demirep that delusive biography has proclaimed her, she would ere this have ceased to pine for a renewal of her old life at Paddington, and for a restoration to the arms of the man who, good though he had been to her for something more than four years, had by this time treated her with revolting cruelty for something more than four months. In fourteen weeks she had written him fourteen letters, and she had received only one letter from him. From Mr. Greville we have the strongest evidence (though it is only a part of the sure testimony to the fact) that she was a girl of pride, quick temper, and the liveliest sensibility. How, then, must she have writhed under his insulting silence, and her galling knowledge (for his neglect to answer her letters, and the significance of Sir William Hamilton's addresses and assurances, even if Mr. Greville's one letter did not enlighten her fully on the point, must have resulted in the galling conviction) that he had put her away from him with concealment, wilful misdirection, and falsehood. Even if he had been wholly honest and without concealment, and had really sent her to Naples for nothing more than an innocent stay of a few months, it would not have been surprising if in the Italian climate, which suited her constitution, and heightened her beauty, and in the natural elation at her brilliant success in so novel and lovely a scene of triumph, the girl (who so short a time since was carried off her feet by the excitements of Ranelagh) had dreaded the thought of returning to her comparatively tame

existence in Edgware Row. But so far was Emma Hart from wishing to settle in Naples, or even thinking that it would be well for her to make a new start in life with a rich protector in a land of delights, where the position of a mistress was far less discreditable than in England, she was still in the first enjoyment of her Neapolitan *éclat* when, in the strength and steadiness of her attachment to the man who had reclaimed her from dissipation and giddiness, she wrote him *a fifteenth letter*, begging him in God's name to write to her. In this letter, which should be read most carefully by those who would know the woman as she really was, Emma entreated him to let her come back to him, and averred that, if he would allow her one guinea a-week for everything, and at the same time permit her to be his domestic mate, she would be contented with her income and happy in her lot. Yet more, she declared that, if he failed to keep his promise and come to her in the autumn, she would return to London at Christmas to see him for the *last time*, because she *found life* insupportable without him. Here is the letter:—

*Emma Hart to the Hon. Charles Greville, M.P.,
King's Mews.*

‘ Naples : July the 22nd, 1786.

‘ MY EVER DEAREST GREVILLE,

‘ I am now onely writing, to beg of you for God's sake to send me one letter, if it is onely a farewell. Sure I have deserved this, for the sake of the love you once had for me. Think, Greville, of our former connexion, and don't despise me. I have not used you ill in any one thing.

I have been from you going of six* months, and you have wrote [only] one letter to me,—instead of which I have sent fourteen to you. So pray, let me beg of you, my much-loved Greville, only one line from your dear, dear hands. You don't know how thankful I shall be for it. For, if you knew the misery [I] feel, oh! your heart would not be intirely shut up against me; for I love you with the truest affection. Don't let anybody sett you against me. Some of your friends—your foes, perhaps; I don't know what to stile them—have long wisht me ill. But, Greville, you never will meet with anybody, that has a truer affection for you than I have, and I onely wish it was in my power to shew you what I could do for you. As soon as I know your determination, I shall take my own measures. If I don't hear from you, and that you are coming according to promise, I shall be in England at Cristmass at farthest. Don't be unhappy at that. I will see you once more, for the last time. I find life is unsuportable without you. Oh, my heart is intirely broke. Then, for God's sake, my ever dear Greville, do write to me some comfort. I don't know what to do. I am now in that state, I am incapable of anything. I have [a] language-master, a singing-master, musick, &c., but what is it for? If it was to amuse you, I should be happy. But, Greville, what will it avail me? I am poor, helpless and forlorn. I have lived with you 5† years, and you have sent me to a strange place, and no one prospect, but thinking you was coming to me. Instead of which, I was told I was to live, you know how, with Sir William. No, I respect him, but no never shall he peraps live with me for a little wile like you, and send me to England. Then what am I to do? what is to become of me?—— But excuse me, my heart is ful. I tell you,—give me one guiney a-week for everything, and live with me, and I will be contented. But no more, I will trust to providence; and whereve[r] you go, God bless

* In this statement Emma overstated the time by *one* month. She had only just begun the *fifth* month of her absence from Mr. Greville.

† Just as she made the *months* of absence from Mr. Greville too many, she made the years of her association with him at Paddington too long by almost a year.

you, and preserve you, and may you allways be happy! But write to Sir William. What as he done to affront you?

• If I have spirits, I will tell you something concerning how we go on, that will make my letter worth paying for. Sir William wants a picture of me, the size of the Bacante, for his new apartment, and he will take that picture of me in the black gown at Romney's, and I have made the bargain with him, that the picture shall be yours, if he will pay for it. And he will. And I have wrote to Romney, to send it.

• Their is two painters now in the house, painting me. One picture is finished. It is the size of the Bacante, setting in a turbin and Turkish dress. The other is in a black rubin hat with wite feathers, blue silk gown, &c. But as soon as these is finished, ther is two more to paint me,—and Angelaca, if she comes. And Marchmont is to cut a head of me, for a ring. I wish Angelaca would come; for Prince Draydrixtou* from Veina is hear, and dines with us often, and he wants a picture of me. He is my cavaliere-servente. He is much in love with me. I walk in the Villa Reale every night. I have generally two Princes, two or 3 nobles, the English minister, and the King with a crowd beyound us. The Q[ueen] likes me much, and desired Prince Draydrixtou to walk with me near her, that she might get a sight of me. For the Prince, when he is not with ous, is with the Queen, and he does nothing but entertain her with my beauty, the accounts of it, &c. But, Greville, the King [h]as eyes, he [h]as a heart, and I have made an impression on it. But he [is] told the Prince Hamilton is my friend, and I must tell you a piece of gallantry of the K . . . On Sunday he dines at Paysilipo, and he allways comes every sunday before the casina in his boat to look at me. We had a small deplomatic party, and we was sailing in our boat, the K. directly came up, put his boat of musick next us, and made all the French horns and the wholl band play. He took of his hat, and sett with his hatt on his knees all the wile, and when we was going to land he made his bow, and said it was a sin he could not speak English. But I have him in my train every night at the Villa or Oppera.

* Emma sometimes spells the Prince's name Draydrixtou and sometimes spells it Draydrixtous.

Diatrikstein am Wien

‘I have been to Pompea &c. &c., and we are going next week round the Island Carprea, Ischea, &c. We shall be aw hay a little wile. I should feil pleasure in all this, if you was heare. But that blessing I have not, and so I must make the best of my lot. God bless you! I would write a longer letter. But I am going to Paysylipo to diner, and I have a conversazzione to-night and a concert.

‘I bathe every day. I have not any irruptions, and—what will surprise you—I am so remarkably fair, that everybody says I put on red and white. We have no English hear but Lord Hervey, who is a lover of mine. I had a letter from Sir Thomas Rumbold last week, who is coming hear in October, and desired me to write him what I wanted from England, and he would bring it me. I am pleased with the fate of Fitzgerald. It shews the very little partiality the[y] have in England for the rich. In Naples he would not have suffered.

‘We have had dreadful thunder and lightning. It fell at the Maltese minister[’s] just by our house and burnt [h]is beds and wires (?) &c. I have now persuaded Sir William to put up a conductor to his house. The lava runs a little, but the mountain is very full and we expect an irruption every day. I must stop, or else I should begin and tell you my ideas of the people of Naples. In my next I will. But, Greville, [of] fleas and lice their is millions. I shall write you an Italian letter soon. God bless you. Make my compliments to your brother and all your friends that’s my friends. Pray, write to Yours Ever—with the truest and sincerest affection—God bless you—write my ever dear, dear Greville.

‘EMMA.’

From a notable passage of this letter, it appears that, at some time previous to the 22nd of July, Emma had learnt the chief purpose for which she had been sent to Italy;—that, whilst pretending he wished her to go to Naples for an innocent visit of a few months, and promising to join her there in the autumn, Mr. Greville had sent her out of England in order that she should become his uncle’s mistress. This

knowledge may have come to her from Mr. Greville's one letter, as well as from Sir William's addresses and assurances. If Mr. Greville's one letter did not tell her the truth on this point, the precise knowledge must have come to her from Sir William Hamilton. Even so, she had good reason and right to interpret Mr. Greville's persistent silence as an acknowledgment of the truth of what Sir William had told her on this particular subject, and had good reason to regard herself as having been 'told' by Mr. Greville himself 'to live, you know how, with Sir William.' If Mr. Greville had for some months lacked the disgraceful hardihood to give the order to her in so many words, he had ere now found the shameful courage. At no long interval from the 22nd of July, she received the order in words written by his pen—no less to her sorrow than to his discredit.

CHAPTER X.

SIR WILLIAM HAMILTON'S VICTORY.

Emma's Fifteenth Letter to Mr. Greville—Letters Crossing on the Way—Emma's Delight and Rage at Mr. Greville's Letter—What Emma Lacked—Her Last Appeal to Mr. Greville's Pity and Love—She Envies a Wafer—Her Fury at Mr. Greville's Counsel—Threats and Menaces—Present of a Blue Hat and Gloves—Emma Threatens to Marry Sir William—Mr. Greville's Sense of Shame and Humiliation—Honour and Meanness—Various Courses open to Emma—The Course She Takes—Her Affection for Sir William Hamilton—Extenuating Circumstances—Question of a Date.

1786 A.D.

EMMA'S letter of the 22nd of July, 1786, to Mr. Greville was crossed, on its way to London, by a remarkable epistle, written to her by that gentleman,—an epistle which seems to have come to her hands on the 31st of July or the following day. Anyhow, she was still in high excitement at its contents when, on the 1st of August, 1786, she answered it in terms showing she had received it by a recent post or the last courier. There are reasons for thinking it was sent from England in a packet, addressed to his uncle by Mr. Charles Greville, and was brought to Italy by the bearer of official dispatches to Sir William Hamilton.

The letter was at the same time cruel and kind,

sympathetic and insulting, gentle and barbarous. Reading it alternately with impulses of tenderness and emotions of disgustful wrath, Emma wept and sobbed violently when she had perused it to the last line. Then, in a sudden reversion of feeling, she covered the paper with kisses,—kissing the words because the writer's hand had traced them, kissing the signature because it was *his* name, kissing the wafer because it had touched his lips. In no part was it a lover's letter. In its kindest passages it was the epistle of a man who, though still wishing to be the reader's friend, was resolute to be henceforth nothing more to her than a friend. The unkindest stab and sharpest sting of the whole letter were given by the very paragraph which contained the kindest expressions. Declaring that he would not, could not, ever again live with her in their former relation, and enjoining her to be thoughtful for her best interests in coming years, the writer supported his uncle's suit, and entreated her to assent to it. He implored her to take the prudent and politic course, and bind a powerful admirer to her by a tie not easily broken, though under some circumstances it might be broken without the law's leave. He to talk of prudence and policy, when she loved him! He to advise her to aught so base!—he whom she had once worshipped for his goodness! Yet the letter had been written by him! His hands had touched every square inch of the paper. At this thought she again covered the paper with kisses.

In judging Emma for the way in which she replied to this letter, that had caused her so many tears,

readers must remember what they are likely to forget,—her birth, her early rearing in a peasant's cottage, the influence of the circumstances in which she had lived from her infancy to the hour when Mr. Greville took her under his protection. On receiving such advice from the man whom she had married, or to whom she was betrothed, a gentlewoman would necessarily banish him as far as possible from her heart. If from fervour or infirmity of nature, she should be incapable of regarding him with *cold* disdain, after throwing him from her tender affections, she might resolve to wreak her vengeance upon him, and soothe her undying rage by working his ruin. In the amplitude of her womanly virtue she might pity him and forgive him, but never again could she love him. But the peasant's daughter, who had herself been a domestic servant, had not all the views of a woman of gentle birth and nurture. She was rarely endowed by nature with emotional fervour, pride, sensitiveness, courage, generosity, truthfulness; but those noble qualities had not from her infancy been fashioned and modified by the rules of conventional refinement, and the sentiments of ancestral dignity. It was not in her nature that she should in all respects feel and act like women who have been schooled from the cradle to be thoughtful for their dignity.

These are matters to be borne in mind by readers, who would apprehend how so proud and sensitive a young woman could reply to such a letter with another appeal to the writer's compassion, and to whatever remained of his old affection for her. The

epistle, in which she made what I conceive to have been her last appeal to his fondness for her, was penned on the 1st of August, 1786. It is one of the very few of Emma's letters from which I withdraw a few words from considerations of delicacy. Not that the words betray a lack of natural refinement, but because their Shakespearian frankness and simplicity might be distasteful to some of the perusers of this work. The sentiments she clothed in this manner are altogether creditable to her. It is to her womanly honour that she expressed them forcibly. The terms she employed for the purpose were suitable to the occasion, and in the private letter did not misbeseem her sex. But what is well in the private letter would be ill in the printed page.

Here is the letter :

Emma to the Hon. Charles Greville.

‘Naples : the 1st of August, 1786.

‘I have received your letter, my dearest Greville, at last, and you don't know how happy I am at hearing from you, however I may [not] like some parts of your letter. But I wont complain. It is enough, I have [the] paper that Greville [h]as wrote on. He [h]as folded [it] up. He wet the wafer. How I envy thee to take the place of Emma's lips, that she would give worlds had she them, to kiss those lips ! But if I go on this whay I shall be incapable of writing. I onely wish that a wafer was my onely rival. But I submit to what God and Greville pleases. I allways knew, I have ever had a foreboding, since first I began to love you, that I was not destined to be happy ; for there is not a King or Prince on hearth, that could make me happy without you. So only consider, when I offer to live with you on the hundred a-year Sir William will give me, what you desire. And this from a girl that a King &c. is sighing for ! As to what you write to me, to oblige Sir William, I will not

answer you. For, oh! if you knew what pain I feel in reading those lines! You advise me to Nothing can express my rage! I am all madness! [You], Greville, to advise me!—you, that used to envy my smiles! How, with cool indifference, to advise me to go Sir William! Oh, that [is the] worst of all! But I will not, no I will not rage. If I was with you, I would murder you and myself both. I will leave of, and try to get more strength; for I am now very ill with a cold I wont look back to what I wrote. I only say I have had 2 letters in 6* months, nor nothing shall ever do for me, but going home to you. If that is not to be, I will except (*sic*) nothing, I will go to London, their go into every excess of vice till I dye. My fate is a warning to young whomen never to be two good. For now you have made me love you, [now] you [have] made me good, you have abandoned me; and some voilent end shall finish our connexion, if it is to finish. But, oh! Greville, you cannot, you must not give me up. You have not the heart to do it. You love me, I am sure; and I am willing to do everything in my power,—and what will you have more? And I onely say this for the last time. I will [n]either beg [n]or pray, do as you like.

‘I am very sorry Lord Brook is dead, and I am sincerely sorry for Sir James and Lady Peachy. But the W[arwic]k family went mind it much. We have been 7 weeks in doubt, whether he was dead or no. For Sir William had a letter from Lord Warwick, and he said Lord Brook was better. So I suppose he must have had a relapse. Poor little boy, how I envy him his happiness!

‘We have a deal of rain hear and voilent winds. The oldest people hear never remember such a summer. But it is lucky for us. The Queen is very poorly, with a cold caught in the Villa Reale, and mine is pretty much like it. We don’t dine at Palsylipa [*sic*] to-day, on account of my cold. We are closely besieged by the K . . . in a round-about manner. He comes every Sunday to P——pa, but we keep the good-will of the other party mentioned abbove, and never give him any encouragement. Prince Draydrix-tous [is] our constant friend. He allways enquires after you.

* Again she overstates the number of months.

He speaks English ; he says I am a dymond of the first watter, and the finest creature on the hearth ; he attends me to the bath, to the walk, &c.

‘ I have such a head-ache to-day with my cold. I don’t know what to do. I shall write next post by Sir William. Only I cant lett a week go without telling you how happy I am at hearing from you. Pray, write as often as you can, and come as soon as you can. If you come, we shall all go home together ; for Sir William will go to England in 2 years, and go throug Spain, and you will like that. Pray, write to me and don’t write in the stile of a freind, but a lover. For I wont hear a word of freind. It shall be all love and no frienship. Sir William is ever freind. But we are lovers. I am glad you have sent me a Blue Hat and gloves. My hat is universaly admired throug Naples. God bless you, my dear Greville, prays your ever truly and affectionate

‘ EMMA HART.

‘ P.S.—Pray write, for nothing will make me so angry [as your silence] : and it is not to your interest to disoblige me, for you don’t know the power I have hear. Onely I never will be his mistress. If you affront me, I will make him marry me.—God bless you for ever.’

The menace in the postscript is amusing, and all the more so because, in the course of a few years, she did, in Marylebone church, what she now threatened. But, though she justified her words so dramatically, she made no vindictive or otherwise ungenerous use of her power, when a word or significant smile from her was enough to make her husband do anything to please her. To the last hour of her residence in Italy, she used her influence over Sir William Hamilton for his nephew’s advantage.

It is certain that Mr. Greville was touched acutely by the letters Emma sent him from Naples between the last day of April and the 1st of August, 1786 ; and

that on learning she knew all the part he had played, and the precise purpose he had in view in sending her out to Italy, he reflected on his position towards her with the bitterest sense of shame and humiliation. That this full revelation of his falseness would be made to Emma, he had no anticipation, when he bade her 'God speed' on her journey to Southern Europe; and, had she passed as readily into Sir William Hamilton's power as both the conspirators imagined she would, Emma would probably have never discovered or suspected what Mr. Greville had designed for her months before she left London. Had matters gone according to his anticipations, Emma would probably have regarded his neglect to answer her letters as a proof that some influence had extinguished his tender regard for her *since* her departure from London, and, in a gust of transient indignation at his fickleness, would have accepted his uncle's suit. In that case, Sir William Hamilton would have had no motive for telling her *why*, and to what end his nephew had sent her to Naples. But, highly though he thought of her disinterestedness and other generous qualities, he had undervalued her in one important particular. Thinking none too well of her, in respect of any of the characteristics for which he had so often and warmly commended, he had formed no adequate conception of the depth and steadiness of her devotion to himself. He had repeatedly averred that, if he offered her a single deliberate affront, she would, so lively was her pride and so keen her sensitiveness, at once cease to love him. After offering her the affront, he discovered how strangely he had

underrated the intensity and enduring force of her affection for the man who had saved her from ruin. It seemed, for a while, that no wound to her pride, no indignity, however scalding and galling, could extinguish the sentiment whose inconvenient vehemence and steadiness fought against the plans of the conspirators.

On discovering the greatness and value of the love he had put from him, Mr. Greville could not retrace the steps he had taken. It was too late for him to withdraw from his compact with his uncle. By recalling Emma to his arms, he would deeply offend his friend Hamilton, and would lose his succession to the Welsh estate. Moreover, matters had gone so far, that he was constrained by a sentiment of honour to hold to the compact, and even to support Sir William's suit with written words;—for honour sometimes compels men of the world to be guilty of black meanness.

On finding Mr. Greville's love for her was at an end, Emma had several courses open to her. She could have returned to London, and 'murdered both Mr. Greville and herself.' She could have journeyed back to England, and, after seeing her 'dear Greville' for the last time, have sought death in dissipation, or seized it by throwing herself into the Thames. It was open to her to withdraw from the ways of vanity, and to live in sinless seclusion on the £100 a-year which Sir William Hamilton had promised to settle upon her, whether she accepted his suit or persisted in declining it. So lovely a girl could no doubt have found a mate willing to take her to church. She might, of course, have become the wife

of some worthy citizen, and passed into the ways of conventional respectability. No doubt she had a choice of several careers, in any one of which she would have escaped social censure, or at least have provoked no further social reprehension. She took no one of these courses. What she did was to yield to Sir William Hamilton's suit, and to become his mistress, with the clear and definite purpose of becoming his wife,—and with the certainty that, if she became his mistress, she would soon become his wife. On the 1st of August, 1786, she had written to Mr. Greville, 'If you affront me, I will make him marry me.' Before the end of the year, she took what she, on re-consideration of all the circumstances of her case, deemed a step needful for the achievement of her threat.

I am not suggesting that she was right to do so ; I am not palliating what was distinctly wrong in her conduct in this business. But I conceive that no generous man, and few generous and charitable women, will think she should be severely judged for taking this step. No one can think so, after reviewing all the circumstances of her previous story, the difficulties of her position, the way in which she was placed in that position, and all the powers of all the several influences and considerations that caused her to take this wrong step. Even by her severest and least generous censor it must be conceded that Emma did not pass from Mr. Greville to Sir William Hamilton with the shameless wantonness and levity, of which she has been accused by hasty and misinformed biographers.

She certainly did not yield to Sir William Hamilton's addresses without strong affection for him, and without manifold sound reasons for regarding him affectionately. On learning every particular of the circumstances resulting in her transference from Paddington to the bright apartment looking to the Gulf of Naples, she discovered nothing to resent in his action towards her. He had not declared his readiness to receive her into his protection until Mr. Greville had shown his wish to escape from his embarrassing association with her. His action for getting her out to Naples had been consequent on his nephew's entreaty that he would take it. Even for the concealment he had practised towards her, Emma could not blame him; for she was not entitled to such confidence from him as the trust she had a right to look for from Mr. Greville. The artifice he had used in drawing her to Naples did not exceed the artifice permitted by social sentiment to suitors of Sir William Hamilton's kind. She had less reason for offence at it, because his official duties rendered it impossible for him to woo her in London. Certainly he had made no unfair use of the advantage coming to him from the position, into which he had drawn her. Whilst bearing himself to her with courteous deference in the eyes of general society, and with sympathetic considerateness in their private intercourse, he had taken all proper precautions to guard her from social misconceptions of his relation to her,—at least from misconceptions to her discredit. His care for her education had exceeded his promises. At the same time, in showing Mrs. Cadogan the

respect due to a gentlewoman, he had given the fond daughter cause to feel herself his debtor. Having liked her Pliny in Paddington Green, it surely is not surprising she regarded him with affection at Naples, and that, on recognising her absolute powerlessness to recover her influence over the nephew, she yielded to the uncle's idolatrous sway. She was wrong in yielding. But who are we—even the very best of us—that we should judge sternly this young woman who, at this moment of strong temptations and manifold difficulties, did what was wrong? Who are entitled to cast stones at her? Only those who never did amiss, and would therefore be the last to speak scornfully of her.

I cannot give the exact date at which Emma yielded to solicitations which she had resisted throughout several months. But from known and indisputable facts we may arrive confidently at the approximate date. Emma had removed from her apartment to Sir William Hamilton's house, some weeks before the January of 1787, when he went on a shooting excursion with the King of Naples. On New Year's Day she had lived for some weeks, possibly for as long as two months, in the closest domestic association with the gentleman, to whom she was married something less than five years later. We may be sure that she did not yield to the persistent suit until she would have received a satisfactory reply to her last appeal to her former protector, had he at the last moment consented to live with her again. That last appeal was dated on the 1st of August, 1786. Taking account of the number of days it took

the post or a courier to travel to and fro, between Naples and London, in pre-railway times, and bearing in mind that Emma was reigning in Sir William Hamilton's house for some weeks before the close of the year, readers may ascertain with sufficient exactness the date of Sir William Hamilton's victory.

CHAPTER XI.

A COLD JANUARY AT NAPLES.

Mistress *not* Wife—Whispers of a secret Marriage—Who believes the Whispers?—Sir William Hamilton at Persano—Emma's daily Letters to Him—Running to and fro of Couriers—How Emma passes the Time—Her Dinner at the Harts'—Her Picture at Caletalino's—Her *comfortable* Dinners—Her Visits to the Convent of S. Romita—She dines with sixty Nuns—The lovely Nun, Beatrice Acquaviva—'She Flattered me up, but I was Pleased'—Emma's Enthusiasm for the Religious Ladies—More Flatterers—Emma's 'Majesty and Juno Look'—Murmurs in the Coteries—Prudence and Virtue—Maria Caroline and her Ladies.

1787 A.D.

FROM the date of her assent to his suit till the 6th of September, 1791 (near upon five years), Emma was Sir William Hamilton's mistress. Readers of this work are not asked to adopt one of the common-places of a quasi-fashionable cant, and to speak of her as Sir William's 'wife in the eyes of God and man.' She certainly was not his wife in the eyes of man; for, though it was soon rumoured that Sir William would certainly ere long marry the lovely young woman he idolized so passionately, everyone in Naples knew she was only the ambassador's mistress. Everyone, of course, means everyone in the fashionable coteries of the capital. In 1788, 1789, and 1790 there

were indeed whispers of a secret marriage that made it easier for English ladies touring about Italy with one eye for foreign sights and the other for reputation at home, to accept the courtesies of the British embassy. Of course, when these whispers came to his ears, Sir William Hamilton did not think it incumbent on his honour to contradict them. To the few English people who, with no right to do so, asked for his confirmation of the whispers, the diplomatist gave words that could not be repeated to his discredit. If the world said he was a married man, the world had his permission to do so. If he had married the Signora Hart secretly, he must have done so in order to keep the affair secret, in which case his mere acquaintances had no right to press him into betraying the secret. On being pressed for the truth by the few people who had a right to demand it of him, Sir William told it; albeit a few persons averred in later time, through misconception, that *before* his second marriage he told them Mrs. Hart *was* his wife. But he was not often troubled in this way; and most of the English ladies, who found comfort in assuming the whispers to be true, knew well enough there was no truth in them.

The Signora Hart's position, however, differed in various ways to her advantage from the position she would have had as the mistress of the British Ambassador at Berlin or Vienna,—and was altogether different from the position she would have had in London as Sir William Hamilton's domestic enchantress. Italian society even yet makes large concessions to people living together with a graceful show

of connubial attachment, but without the reality of wedlock; and a century since it was far more lenient to well-mannered offenders against certain of the canons of the church. No doubt the ladies who stood about Maria Caroline on occasions of state held aloof from the English Signora, and for a while not a few of the touring ladies from England were careful to guard their right to aver in London that they had never exchanged words of civility with the notorious Emma. But the adroit Sir William Hamilton played his cards in the coteries so cleverly for the Signora Hart's advantage, that people of fashion were not slow in thronging her *salons* when she ventured to open them for the entertainment of many visitors. What impropriety could there be in listening to the songs and eating the ices of so beautiful a lady, who, whilst resting under Sir William Hamilton's roof, was living in the home of her own admirable and virtuous mother?

Whilst the British Ambassador was enjoying the excitements of sport at Persano, and raising himself yet higher in the Bourbon's regard, Emma remained at Naples, amidst interests and employments that caused the time to pass lightly with her during the unusually severe cold of January, 1787. What with her daily music-lessons and singing-lessons, her daily visits to the Caletalinos, where yet another portrait of her was being painted, and her pleasant drives in the keen air, she spent her mornings cheerily, coming home with a keen appetite for the dinners, which she enjoyed thoroughly, and spoke of gratefully in her letters to Sir William. It is a point to be observed

in this young woman's story that, Beauty though she was, she went through her dinners with critical relish, and was withheld by no false shame from confessing they afforded her much satisfaction. She liked them almost as much, when she had no messmate but her mother, as on the days when she ate her dainties and drank her glass or two of sparkling wine with a group of feasters and flatterers about her. 'So I have my dinner very comfortable indeed,' she wrote to her absent lord; adding, with characteristic amiability, for the benefit of servants who waited on her at these delectable repasts, 'For, if you was to know how kind everybody behaves to me, you would love them.' Partly because she was beautiful, and partly because she was hearty in manner towards them, and in some degree because they, one and all, knew that to have her good word was to have the Ambassador's good opinion, the servants of the grand palazzo were her joyful slaves. After the good dinner, the Signora Hart had her half-hour's nap, from which she rose with spirit for the renewal of her studies. Night was her time for writing letters to Sir William Hamilton—letters that, whatever their literary shortcomings may be, gave her Pliny the latest gossip of her circle, and enabled him to realize vividly how she passed the hours in his absence. She wrote to him on Sunday night, Monday night, Wednesday night, and Thursday night, and most likely on Tuesday night also, though the epistle thrown off on that night, if she wrote one, has perished.

Written over-night, so that the courier, who would call for it in the morning, should not be kept long

waiting, each of these letters was left open till the morrow for a postscript. The messenger who took the letter had usually brought Emma a line from Sir William half-an-hour before. Whilst Sir William was at Persano, messengers passed daily between him and Emma.

Here is the brief letter she wrote him on the night of Sunday, the 7th of January, 1787, when she was displeased at not hearing often enough from him, and sleepy from having been out in the wind, with its postscript of forgiveness, written after twelve hours of sleep, and the welcome arrival of an epistle from Persano:—

Emma to Sir William Hamilton, at Persano.

‘ Naples, Sunday night [7th of January] ’87.

‘ Endead, my Sir William, I am angry. I told you one line would satisfie me, and when I have no other comfort then your letters, you should not so cruelly disapoint me; for I am unhappy, and I don’t feil right without hearing from you, and I won’t forgive you; no, that I wont. It is a very cold night, and I am just returned from Hart’s. He was very civil to me; there was an Abbé and a very genteel man, a friend of Andreas, and an Englishman I did not know; but they was all very polite, and such a profuson of diner that it is impossible to describe. I sett next to Hart, who would help me to every thing, and poor man could not see, but to the best of his power paid me a number of compliments, and produced me as a specimen of English beauty. After diner he fetched an Italian song, that was made on Lady Sophi Jenner (?) forty years past, and he had translated it to English and would sing it; and when he came to dymond eyes and pearl teeth, he looked at me and bid the others look at me; and he is going to dedicate the English to me, and oh! you can’t think, just as if he could see me and as if I was the most perfect beauty in the world. Endead, I heard the Abbé say to the others I was perfectly

beautiful and elagantly behaved in my manners and conversation. And so the [y] all admired me. But Hart is quite gone. He is come [? coming] to see me to-night. Poor Tierny is very poorly.

‘Monday morning:—Oh, thank you, my dear Sir William, for your letter. Endead, I forgive you and am sorry I scolded you. The wind made me so sleepy that I slept till eight a clock, and was fast asleep when Vincenzo brought your letter, and I read it in bed, and give it a good hug. But I wished you had been there. But I give it a kiss or 2. But I hope you will believe me sencere when I write to you; for endead, everything flows from my heart, and I cannot stop it. I am glad you had some good sport. I should like to see that that is 200 weight, for it must be a fine one; but the other 2, that got of wounded, the[y] must be somewere in great pain. Adio, my dear Sir William. Lying in bed so long [h]as made me hurry as this goes in half a minet. I was in bed last night at 8 a clock and slept till eight this morning. Yours ever E. H.’

A pretty picture might be put on canvas of Emma sitting at table between the sightless Mr. Hart and the genteel Abbé,—the host, who extolled so enthusiastically the beauties he could not see, and the Abbé, who averred to Mr. Hart’s other guests that the Signora was ‘perfectly beautiful and elegantly behaved in her manners and conversation.’

Emma to Sir William Hamilton.

‘Monday night, Jan^y the 8th, 1787.

‘MY DEAR SIR W^m.,

‘I don’t know how you like this excessive cold wether; but I do think I never felt much colder in Inghilterra; for to-day it was impossible to keep one’s self warm; and I pittied you much, for if you have not [had] a good sport you must be frose with standing still. The ice is lying abbout the streets in Naples, just as it is in London the hardest frosts there is. I now see that every thing you

say is true: for you told me to stop tell Jan^y, and then I should feil, and to-day [h]as fuly proved it.

‘I was at Caletalino’s to-day. She will make a very great likeness and very pretty, it will be. It shall not be two naked, for it would not be so interesting, and as you will have it in a box, it will be seen a good deal . . . those beautys that only you can see shall not be exposed to the common eyes of all

‘Mr. Greffer was here yesterday and 2 of his children. He enquired for you abbout money, and I told him, if he could stop or go to Borely or Marn Bem (?), but he says he will make shift till he sees you, and I think he is right, if he can, for I would not go to those creatures for a grain, tho’ it is a pitty you should be trubled with them.—Show-rawky gives a diner to-moro to all his musick people, even the harpscord tuner, at Torre-del-Greco. All the Caletalinos go there, and I fancy there will be a fine mess of them altogether, for I don’t hear of any body of fashion that is going. But he will be master of the Band, and the[y] will flatter him, and he will be in his kingdom come. It is a pitty he is so od, for I believe he [h]as a good heart. He has given Hackert the finest new sattin dress lined with sable besides a hundred guines a-pece for 2 little pictures, that I should think twenty enough for them, for I am of your opinion, I would pay for good things, but not for bad ones, and the[y] are pretty but not fine painting.

‘I have Gallucey from nine to ten, from ten to twelve at the Caletalinos, from twelve to one my lesson, and between 2 and 3 my diner. I dine frequently upstairs, for Gasperino said a fire in that room must be to air it well, and the diner is cold before it gets to our room. So I have my diner very comfortable, endead. For if you was to know how kind everybody behaves to me, you would love them.—Tuesday morn:—I have just received your kind letter, my dear Sir W^m. But how I was frightened in reading abbout those men. Sure they wont die Good God! what a passion the[y] must have been in, but there ought to be some punishment to prevent them from such dreadful work. I am sorry you had not any sport. To stay out in the cold yesterday must be enough to kill you. How I wish’d to give you some warm punch . . . to make up for your bad day.

‘I wish you would tell me something to say to Cune or Curney your man, in answer to what I wrote to you, or will you write to Gasperino to tell Sesos Maitre d’Hotel the[y] shall not take his room from him. I am sorry to trouble you. But as he asked me, I could not denigh to write to you. Adio and believe me

‘Yours affectionately, my dearest Sir William, for ever,
‘EMMA.

‘P.S.—I am sorry you don’t hear of coming home. But patienza.’

The words in the above-given letter, touching Mr. Greffer’s application for money, indicate the confidence Sir William already accorded to Emma on matters of his pecuniary affairs. This Mr. Greffer was the same person who, some thirteen years later, became the manager of Nelson’s duchy of Bronté in the farther Sicily, through the influence of Lady Hamilton, whose good-will and care for friends less favourably placed than herself were never wanting in steadiness.

On Wednesday, the 10th of January, 1787, Emma paid a visit to the Convent of S. Romita, a convent of sixty nuns, where she was received with singular favour, and entertained with sweet-meats and a profusion of compliments by the Superior of the religious house, Beatrice Acquaviva, the loveliest nun imaginable and only twenty-nine years of age, whose hands (when they were not hidden in a muff) flashed with diamond rings, whose teeth showed whiter than ivory, whose voice was music, and whose charming face and rogueish eyes overflowed with merriment. Though nine years had passed since she took the veil, this delicious Beatrice Acquaviva had never for a moment

regretted her retirement from a world in which she was so eminently qualified to play a brilliant part. Kissing her lips, cheeks, and forehead, whilst she exclaimed again and again 'Ah! charming fine creature!', Beatrice told Emma she looked like an angel, in her lovely hat and fine hair, and in her simple dress of clear white dimity, with a blue sash. Telling how some years since the British Minister's wife (*i.e.*, the Lady Hamilton whom Sir William had married 'somewhat against his inclination') had visited the convent, the holy and most religious Beatrice remarked enthusiastically, and at the same time disparagingly, how greatly Sir William Hamilton's mistress had the advantage of the late Lady Hamilton, who 'was little, short, and pinched-faced.' Enraptured by her angelic visitor's beauty, Beatrice declared vehemently that she honoured her for her goodness. What wonder? For had not the fame of Emma's compassionate munificence to the poor and miserable penetrated the walls of the convent, and filled its galleries with the aroma of sacred incense?

'Now,' ejaculated the emotional Beatrice to the even more emotional Emma, 'it would be worth while to live for such a one as you. Your good heart would melt at any trouble that befel one, and partake of one's grief, or be equally happy at one's good fortune. But I never met with such a friend yet, nor ever saw a person I could love till now, and you shall have proofs of my love.' Giving Emma an embroidered satin pocket-book, which the donor had made with her own fingers, Beatrice entreated the angelic wearer of the blue-sashed dimity dress to return to the con-

vent on the morrow, in time to dine with the sixty sisters,—an invitation that was accepted gladly.

‘I shall be happy to-day,’ Emma wrote to Sir William Hamilton in the earlier of the two Thursday-morning’s postscripts to her Wednesday night’s letter, ‘for I shall dine with them all and come home at night. It is a beautiful house and garden and the attention of them was very pleasing,’—adding, with piquant naturalness and simplicity, ‘I think she’ (*i.e.*, Beatrice Acquaviva) ‘flattered me up, but I was pleased.’

That Emma was received in this way at the convent shows how greatly the social position of Sir William Hamilton’s mistress at Naples differed from the position she would have had in London.

Here is the letter, in which she told Sir William of her intercourse with the religious ladies :

Emma, at Naples, to Sir William Hamilton, at Persano.

‘Wednesday, Jany. the 10th, 1787.

‘MY DEAR SIR W^M.

‘I had hardly time to thank you for your kind letter of this morning, as I was buisy prepairing for to go on my visit to the Convent of S. Romita; and endead I am glad I went, tho’ it was a short visit. But tomorrow I dine with them in full assembly. I am quite charmed with Beatrice Acquaviva. Such is the name of the charming whoman I saw to-day. Oh, Sir William, she is a pretty whoman. She is 29 years old. She took the veil at twenty, and does not repent to this day, though, if I am a judge of physiognomy, her eyes does not look like the eyes of a nun. They are allways laughing, and something in them vastly alluring, and I wonder the men of Naples would suffer the[ir] onely pretty whoman who is realy pretty to be shut in a convent. But it is like the mean-spirited ill taste of the Neapolitans. I told her I wondered how she would be

lett to hide herself from the world, and I dare say thousands of tears was shed, the day she deprived Naples of one of its greatest ornaments. She answered with a sigh, that endead numbers of tears was shed, and once or twice her resolution was allmost shook, but a pleasing comfort she felt at regaining her friends, that she had been brought up [with], and religious considerations strengthened her mind, and she parted with the world with pleasure, and since that time one of her sisters had followed her example, and another—which I saw—was preparing to enter soon. But neither of her sisters is so beautiful as her, tho' the[y] are booth very agreable. But I think Beatrice is charming, and I realy feil for her an affection. Her eyes, Sir William, is I dont know how to describe them. I stopt one hour with them, and I had all the good things to eat, and I promise you they don't starve themselves. But there dress is very becoming, and she told me that she was allowed to wear rings and mufs and any little thing she liked, and endead she displayd today a good deal of finery, for she had 4 or 5 dimond rings on her fingers, and seemed fond of her muff. She has excellent teeth, and shows them, for she is allways laughing. She kissed my lips, cheeks and forehead, and every moment exclaimed 'charming fine creature,' admired my dress, said I looked like an angel, for I was in clear wite dimity and a blue sash. She admired my hat and fine hair, and she said she had heard I was good to the poor, and generous and noble minded. "Now," she says, "it would be worth wile to live for such a one as you. Your good heart would melt at any trouble that befel me, and partake of one's greef or be equally happy at one's good fortune. But I never met with a freind yet, or I ever saw a person I could love tell now, and you shall have proofs of my love." In short I sat and listened to her, and the tears stood in my eyes, I don't know why; but I loved her at that moment. I thought what a charming wife she would have made, what a mother of a family, and what a freind, and the first good and amiable whoman I have seen since I came to Naples for to be lost to the world—how cruel! She give me a sattin pocket-book of her own work, and bid me think of her, when I saw it and was many miles far of; and years hence when she peraps should be no more, to look at it, and think the per-

son that give it had not a bad heart. Did not she speak very pretty? but not one word of religion; but I shall be happy today, for I shall dine with them all, and come home at night. It is a beautiful house and garden, and the attention of them was very pleasing. There is sixty whomen and all well-looking, but not like the fair Beatrice. "Oh Emma," she says to me, "the[y] brought here the vieve (?) minister's wife, but I did not like the looks of her at first. She was little, short, pinchd-face, and I receved her coolly. How different from you, and how surprised was I in seeing you tall in statue (*sic*). We may read your heart in your countenance, your complexion, in short, your figure and features is rare, for you are like the marble statues I saw, when I was in the world." I think she flattered me up, but I was pleased.—Thursday Morning: I have just receved your kind letter, and I am pleased and content that you should write to me, tho' it is onely one or two lines a day. Be assured I am grateful. I am sorry you had bad sport, and I shall be most happy to see you at home, to warm you with my kisses, and comfort you with my smiles and good humer, and oblidge you by my attentions, which will be the constant pleasure of, my Dear Sir William, your truly affectionate—EMMA.

'P.S.—Cuny's duty to you, and thanks you abbout the Marquis Sesos—(you may look big upon it).

Sir William Hamilton was still with the King, slaughtering animals in the Royal Chase of Persano, when Emma wrote him the following letter, probably on the 18th of January, 1787:—

Emma to Sir William Hamilton.

[January (? 18th) 1787.]

Naples: Thursday morning.

'Oh, my dearest Sir William, I have just received your dear sweet letter. It has charmed me. I don't know what to say to you to thank you in words kind enough. Oh, how kind! Do you call me your dear freind? Ah, what a happy creature is your Emma!—me that had no freind, no protector, no body that I could trust, and now to be the

freind, the Emma, of Sir William Hamilton! Oh, if I could express my self! if I had words to thank you, that I may not thus be choaked with meanings, for which I can find no utterance! Think only, my dear Sir William, what I would say to you, if I could express myself, Only to thank you a thousand times. Mr. Hart went awhay yesterday with his head turnd; I sung so well Handell's 3 songs . . . that you never saw a man so delighted. He said it was the most extraordinary thing he ever knew. But what struck him was holding on the notes and going from the high to low notes so very neat. He says I shall turn the heads of the English. He was so happy with Gallucci. He made great frendship with him. Galucci played solo some of my solfegos and you whold have thought he would have gone mad. He says he had heard a great deal of me. But he never saw or heard of such a whoman before. He says when he first came in, I frightened him with a Majesty and Juno look that I receved him with. Then he says that whent of on being more acquainted, and I enchanted him by my politeness and the maner in which I did the honors, and then I made him allmost cry with Handels; and with the comick he could not contain himself, for he says he never saw the tragick and comick muse blended so happily together. He says Gosrich (?) would have been delighted with me. I suppose he makes to-day a fine work all over Naples. But your ideas of him are the same as mine. We boath think alike of him. He taulks too much for me.

'I hope you have received the letter and news I sent you yesterday. I told you Gatty is here. He is enchanted with me. He says I sing to please him better than anybody. He says the progress I make, he could not have believed. He sat and listened with so much pleasure, and his neice was very much pleased. She is gone to Don Andrea's house. Gatty is here, and he says I am so accomplishd, so kind, speaks Italian so well, that he sits 2 hours together and taulks to me. Him and Don Andrea dines with me today. I thought as you was not at home that Don Andrea would be company for him. His neice dined with us yesterday. But today she is to dine with the wife of Don A——, and the[y] are to come in the evening to hear me sing. Your affec. ever—EMMA.'

It was thus the year 1787 opened to Emma, whilst it was a question with the shrewdest of those of Sir William Hamilton's English friends, who were actual observers of his proceedings, whether his undisguised and even obtrusive association with Mrs. Hart would not, after causing painful scenes and indignant protests, even eventuate in his recall from Naples. From what has been said of Emma's position on earlier pages of this chapter, it may not be supposed she won in a few months the remarkable degree of recognition that was accorded to her by the Neapolitan *beau monde* in 1789 and 1790. Of course, there were mutinous murmurings in the English colony at Naples, attended with debate whether measures should not be taken for putting an end to what promised to become a prodigious scandal. In truth, Sir William Hamilton was perhaps the only man of his generation, who could have played successfully the perilous game from which he rose as far as possible the winner. A man of infinite tact and perfect temper, he was confident of his ability to conciliate the people whose feelings he outraged. Influential at the Court, universally admired, liberal in hospitality, and overflowing with courtesy to all who had the slightest claim to his consideration, he was a personage to whom many of the Neapolitan English were strongly attached, and with whom few could afford to quarrel. Even by the English colonists and tourists it was felt that Sir William, with his one infatuation, was a far better Minister for *their interests* than any other diplomatist could be. On counting what an excess of virtue might cost them, they decided to be tolerant.

So the murmurings never became an outcry, and in the last month of 1787 Sir William Hamilton could assure one of his intimate friends that Emma's behaviour had won her many sensible admirers, and that, without receiving her into their circle at present, the Queen of Naples and the most exalted ladies of the Neapolitan nobility took every occasion of showing her every distant civility.

CHAPTER XII.

FROM FRIENDSHIP TO LOVE.

Emma's Trip to Sorrento—Diversions and Triumphs of the Trip—Song after Song—A Priest in Love with Emma—Her Pride in her own Doings—Her Nine Days in Ischia—The Ischian Peasants kneel and pray to Her—She ascends Mount Vesuvius—The Prince Royal on the Mountain—'Prince, who was your Tutor?'—On the House-Top at Caserta—Teresa and her Mistress—Dutch Gallantry—Salvo upon Salvo—Vessels of War salute Emma with all their Guns—'Quick, to San Carlo'—Emma's Four Months' Letter to Mr. Greville—Her Shawls and Attitudes—She originates 'the Shawl Dance'—Emma at Caserta—An Hour's Absence makes the Heart grow Fonder.

1787 A.D.

IN Naples, going to balls and concerts at the houses where she may be presumed to have seen something of those ladies of the nobility who only showed her distant civility, Emma also visited the country-houses of some of the persons of rank and wealth who entertained her in the capital. Towards the close of July or in the beginning of August, 1787, she and Sir William Hamilton were the guests of the Duke Saint De Maitre (according to Emma's rendering of the ducal style) at Sorrento, where she enjoyed herself vastly for ten days, in a company of people with high-sounding names, who applauded her songs tem-

pestuously, and worshipped her with every degree of suitable extravagance.

In a letter, that will be given *in extenso* in this chapter, Emma gave Mr. Greville a lively description of the ways in which she passed this pleasant time. Bathing in the sea every morning, she in due course joined the duke and his visitors at breakfast in a fine summer-house that, built upon a rock, commanded a superb view of Capri, Ischia, Procida, Naples, Portici, Vesuvius, and the bright expanse of the diversely tinted Bay of Naples. One morning they observed the lava running down Vesuvius, whilst smoke rose from the mountain in dark volumes that gradually disappeared into the blueness of the sky. Emma made several sketches of the mountain, possibly more to her own contentment, than to the critical satisfaction of Sir William Hamilton, who seems to have spoken jocularly of her artistic method when he declared her drawings of the mountain would soon be as good as his own. 'I have,' the self-complacent young woman wrote to her former protector, 'made some drawings from it, for I am so used to draw now, it is as easy as A. B. C. For when we are at Naples, we dine every [Sun]day at the Villa Emma at Posilipo, and I make 2 or 3 drawings. Sir William laughs at me, and says I shall rival him with the mountain now.'

Even in her holidays, Emma had a daily singing-lesson from the Professor, whom Sir William retained permanently on his establishment, and had brought in his train to Sorrento. The singing-lesson having been taken within an hour or so of breakfast,

the Signora Hart and others of the ducal party mounted asses, and rode about the neighbourhood, paying visits, till it was time for them to return to their three o'clock dinner. Having dined, they betook themselves to the boats, and sailed about the coast till it was needful for them to get back and dress for the evening's conversazione and musical entertainment, in both of which the Signora Hart played a chief part.

At the conversazione she was by this time so good a linguist that she apprehended at the moment whatever was said to her in French or Italian, and in either tongue proved herself at least as ready and sparkling a talker as anyone who addressed her. Speaking of the people with whom she exchanged shots in repartee, she wrote to Mr. Greville, 'I paid them,'—an expression showing that she still retained in her English vocabulary at least one of her old Cheshire provincialisms. She certainly 'paid' the Italian gentleman who, having on several occasions hinted his desire to be her 'cavaliere servente,' enquired, on the evening before she and Sir William set their faces homewards, whether she was returning to Naples so soon because she had left a lover there? Assuming a look of the severest propriety, faintly touched with curiosity and surprise, she replied, 'Do you take me for one of your countrywomen? Sir, I am English. I have only one "cavaliere servente," and I have brought him with me.'

The salon adjoining the great concert-room, where the musicians of Sir William Hamilton's band played selections from famous operas, was the scene of

Emma's greatest triumphs. On ordinary evenings, singing no more than four songs ('2 searous songs and 2 buffos,' as she wrote to Mr. Greville), she gave her auditors no less than fifteen songs at her last and farewell concert; the last being a song she sang with a tambourine in her hand, as a young girl with a raree-show,—'the prettiest thing,' she observed complacently in the epistle which was something more than four months in hand, for Mr. Greville's entertainment, 'you ever heard! In short, I left the people at Sorrento with their heads turned. I left some dying, some crying, and some in despair. Mind you, these were all nobility, as proud as the devil. But we humbled them!'

Later in the year, Sir William and Emma, attended by the musicians of Sir William's band, her Professor of music, her maid, and four men-servants, went to Ischia, where they were received by a certain Countess (styled the Countess Mahoney in Emma's letter to Mr. Greville), who came down to the sea-shore to welcome her distinguished guests, and lost no time in pouring on the Ambassador's enchantress the flatteries that were so agreeable to her. Taking the lovely young woman into her embrace, and thanking Sir William for bringing his angel to Ischia, the Countess covered the angel with kisses, and laughed at the suggestion that her muslin robe was no fit costume for her hostess's dinner-table. So, in default of time for a more elaborate toilet, the Angel made her first appearance before the Countess's friends in 'a muslin chemise,' which suited her so well that she was admired almost as much for her taste in dress as

for her beauty. The Angel had the place of honour at dinner, by the side of the Countess, who 'distinguished her with every mark of attention.' Having brought her harpsichord with her, Emma went to the music-room with a confidence which she justified by her superb rendering of the rondos and the bravura song, which she sang to the numerous party of gallant men and fair ladies, who rewarded her with ten minutes' measure of deafening applause, and then declared rapturously that never before had they 'seen such a bellissima creatura.' On the morrow, Emma was applauded no less vociferously at 'the accadema of musick,' with which the Countess entertained the noblesse of the island, after giving them a magnificent dinner.

But Emma's grandest triumph at Ischia was the conquest of a priest, who went almost mad for love of her, and declared his partial madness so frankly and felicitously, that Sir William was constrained to console him for the hopelessness of his passion with a gift of her portrait, set in a snuff-box. Every day of Emma's sojourn of nine days in Ischia was a festival at the palace of the delightful countess, who, some months later, was repaid for her courtesies very much as the Priest had been for his adoration,—with a picture of Emma, in Turkish costume.

At some time between the excursion to Sorrento and the trip to Ischia, Emma went up Vesuvius, which had for some time been raising hopes and fears of an eruption, no less terrifically fierce than the '67 eruption. Mounting their asses at Portici, so as to get to the summit at nightfall, Emma and her patron

were witnesses of a spectacle that equalled in its particular way any show with which the mountain had ever favoured him in more memorable seasons of its volcanic unrest. On arriving at the Hermitage, they saw a cascade of liquid fire falling down a great precipice. In its descent the fiery lava set trees and brushwood ablaze, so as to give all the mountain that was visible from their point of view the appearance of being on fire. Surrounding the hermit's house, the lava took its impious and destructive course through his chapel, in spite of the sacred pictures and relics, that should have preserved the holy building from such profanation.

In her descent from this gorgeous sight, Emma came upon the Prince Royal, who had climbed almost to the point, where he would have had the whole scene to perfection, when his attendants compelled him to retrace his steps, for safety's sake. On being asked by Sir William and Emma how he liked the sight, the youthful prince replied, '*Bella ma poca roba*,' whereas, if his 'foolish tutors' (as Emma, with a happy example of her genius for misspelling her mother tongue, reported to Mr. Greville), had taken him five hundred yards higher, 'he would have seen the noblest and sublimest sight in the world.' With reason, Emma was little less astonished at the folly of these teachers of the Bourbon's heir than she was amazed a few weeks earlier by the Italian Prince—not a Royal Prince, but a Prince of an illustrious house, and sixty years old—who, on hearing her say at Naples she had recently been in Capri, asked whether she went there by land or water. The Prince

discovered he had made a slip, when the lovely English signora, after regarding him for half-a-minute with a piquant show of amusement and curiosity, observed, ‘Prince, who was your tutor?’

Lady in possession of the British Embassy, Emma was also the mistress of Sir William Hamilton’s country-house at Caserta,—that was re-decorated, re-furnished, and provided with a new music-room for her greater enjoyment. It was to the roof of this charming home that, on some night in August of 1787, she took her favourite maid, Teresa, to show her the flames rising from Vesuvius, and the glow that brooded over the far-away mountain. On seeing such awful indications of Heaven’s displeasure, Teresa dropped on her knees, and cried for help to St. Januarius. Whereupon, in glee at the girl’s alarm, and in her protestant contempt for the Saint whose protection was implored, Emma dropped on her knees, and, mimicking the servant’s voice and action, implored help of St. Coala. Seeing she was being mocked, Teresa rose quickly, and inquired gravely whether it were possible that her mistress, the Signora, did not believe in St. Januarius.

On being assured the Signora was indeed the infidel her sportiveness had declared her, Teresa was at a loss how to account for such impiety in the Signora, whom God had so highly favoured.

‘Favoured? How has God favoured me above other people?’ retorted the mistress.

‘Oh, God!’ cried Teresa, in dismay at such wickedness in the most fortunate of womankind, ‘your Eccellenza is very ungrateful! God has been so good

as to make your face to resemble the face of the Blessed Virgin, and you don't esteem it as a favour?'

'Did you ever see the Blessed Virgin?' Emma inquired, sharply.

'Surely I have!' returned Teresa, stoutly, 'and you are like the pictures of her. See, Signora, did not the people at Ischia fall on their knees to you, and pray to you, in the Blessed Mary's name, to grant their requests?'

In this same year, also, was it that Commodore Melville, of the Dutch Navy, with his brother-officers of two Dutch ships-of-war, lying in the Bay of Naples, entertained the English Beauty on board one of the vessels. When Sir William Hamilton, Emma, and Mrs. Cadogan came to the sea-side, on their way to this *fête*, they found the Commodore, the Captain, and four other Dutch officers, ready to take them in their long-boat to the ship where the banquet had been prepared for them. Emma wore her favourite costume for festivities in the open air,—a white muslin dress and blue sash, with her auburn ringlets falling from the broad brim of her hat 'almost to her heels.' As she stepped into the long-boat, she was saluted by twenty pieces of cannon; and whilst the long boat was being rowed past the smaller of the Dutch vessels, the frigate fired all her guns. The table on board the larger vessel was laid for thirty persons, and Emma was enthroned in the seat of honour. The salvos to the Signora Hart were heard throughout Naples. The Queen heard them in the Palace Reale, the proudest ladies of Neapolitan nobility heard them. The existence of the girl who was honoured in this

fashion could not be ignored. From that hour it was clear to the people who knew Naples that no combination of court ladies could for any long time keep the Signora outside the most exclusive circles of Neapolitan society.

The dinner on board the Dutchman was a brilliant success. In one particular only could the *gala* have gone better. It having been arranged that she should go to the Opera-house in the evening, and, sitting in a box near the Royal Box, display her new purple satin gown, her white satin petticoat trimmed with crape and spangles, and her lovely cap of white feathers, fresh from Paris, Emma naturally desired to return to the British Embassy in time to make an elaborate toilet. But in this she was disappointed. The dinner was not over till half-past five (English time); and, though she whispered to him that her admirable hair-dresser was even then waiting at the Embassy to arrange her tresses for the evening, Sir William was so delighted with the Dutch officers that he could not resist their proposal to drink another bottle to the welfare and glory of the loveliest woman in all creation. The time taken in drinking this other bottle was all the time Emma could have given to her hair-dresser and toilet, had she left the ship at 5.30. When *both* the Dutch vessels gave her a parting salute with *all* their guns, as she was being taken ashore in the long-boat, the King and Queen were already driving to San Carlo.

On getting back to the quay, where the British Minister's coach had been waiting for more than an hour, Emma had to choose between foregoing the

opera and hastening thither as she was, in her blue hat and white dress, with her chestnut curls playing about over her heels. Of course, the girl, who delighted in music, and wished to show herself at San Carlo with her train of sailors, chose the latter alternative. Exclaiming 'Quick, to San Carlo!', she sprang into her carriage, which afforded seats for Sir William Hamilton, the Dutch commodore, the Dutch captain, and the other four Dutch officers. State-coaches were roomy machines a hundred years since. Emma made the right choice. Had she been in her satins and spangles, with her Paris cap surmounting a *coiffure* of the most artistic designs and finish, she could not have enjoyed the music more, or made a greater sensation at the Opera. Whilst she—the Queen of Beauty, whose guns had thrice that happy day thundered throughout Naples—sate in her box, between Sir William and the Dutch commodore, she bethought herself how the other five officers in their uniforms stood in the rear, guarding her as though she were a queen indeed!

Of the various matters touched upon in this chapter, and also of other particulars of her life in 1787, Emma wrote to Mr. Greville in a long epistle, that was begun on some day of August in that year, and, after growing on the writer's hands through a term of more than four calendar months, was finished at the end of the following December. This long epistle will be soon submitted *in extenso* to the readers of this work, who will do well to peruse and examine attentively each of its paragraphs.

Though I am not in a position to state positively

that when she began, in August, 1787, to write this long letter, Emma had not written to Mr. Greville since the date of her last appeal to him for a renewal of their domestic association, I am of opinion that there had been no correspondence between them during the twelve months following that final and futile entreaty. I may err on this point, but, even if it is erroneous, most readers will allow that my opinion is countenanced by the opening paragraph of the long epistle, that was in hand for more than four months. At the same time, it appears, from the concluding paragraph of the lengthy epistle, that she had received presents from Mr. Greville before the letter was finished in December. The 'boxes' of presents from London may have come to Emma's hands even so late as the opening of that month, and may perhaps be regarded as Mr. Greville's first overture to her for reconciliation. Anyhow, from the close of 1787 to the date of Sir William Hamilton's death in 1803, and to a still later date, Emma and Mr. Greville were on the friendliest terms.

Emma to the Hon. Charles Greville.

'Napoli : Agosto —th, [1787].

'Alltho you never think me worth writing to you, yet I cannot so easily forget you, and whenever I have had any particular pleasure, I feil as tho I was not right, tell I had communicated it to my dearest Greville. For you will ever be dear to me, and tho' we cannot be together, lett ous core-pond as freinds. I have a happiness in hearing from you, and a comfort in communicating my little storeys to you, because I flatter myself that you still love the name of that Emma, that was once very dear to you, and, but for unfortunate evils, might still have claimed the first place in your

affections. And I hope still, you will never meet with any person that will use you ill. But never will you meet with the sincere love that I shew'd you. Don't expect it; for you cannot meet with it. But I have done. Only think of my words;—you will meet with more evils than one, for, as Sir William says, that one is the devil.

‘We have been at Sorrento on a visit at the Duke Saint De Maitre for ten days. We are just returned. But I never pass'd a happier ten days, except in Edg . . . re R . . . d. In the morning we bathed, and returned to a fine summer house, where we [had] breakfast. But first this summer-house is over the sea, on a rock that looks over Caprea, Ischia, Procheza, Vesuva, Porticea, Naples, &c., &c., the sea all before us, that you have no idea of the beauties of it from this little paradise. After breakfast we view'd the Lava running down 3 miles of Vesuvius, and every now and then black clouds of smoke, rising into the air [that] had the most magnificent appearance in the world. I have made some drawings from it, for I am so used to draw now, it is as easy as A B C. For when we are at Naples, we dine every [Sun]day at the Villa Emma at Paisiello, and I make 2 or 3 drawings. Sir William laughs at me, and says I shall rival him with the mountain now.

‘After breakfast I had my singing-lesson: for Sir William [h]as took a musician into the house. But he is one of the best masters in Italia. After my lesson we rode on asses all about the country, paid visits, and dined at 3, and after dinner sailed about the coast, returned and dress'd for Conversazioni. We had Sir William's Band of Musick with us, and about dark the concert in one room, and I sat in another, and received all the nobility, who came every night, whilst we was there, and I sung generally 2 serious songs and 2 buffos. The last night I sang fifteen songs. One was a Recitative from an opera at St. Carlo's. The beginning was *Luci Belle sio vadoro*, the finest thing you ever heard, that for ten minutes after I sung it, there was such a clapping, that I was obliged to sing it over again. And I sung after that one with a Tambourin, in the character of a young Girl with a raree-show, the prettiest thing you ever heard. In short, I left the people at Sorrento with their heads turned. I left some dying, some crying, and some in

despair. Mind you, theis was all nobility, as proud as the devil. But we humbled them. But what astonished them was that I should speak such good Italian. For I paid them, I spared non of them, tho I was civil and oblidge every body. One asked me if I left a love at Naples, that I left them so soon. I pulled my lip at him, to say, "Do you take me to be an Italian whoman, that [h]as four or five different men to attend her? Sir, I am English. I have one cavalere-servante, and I have brought him with me," pointing to Sir William. But he never spoke another word after this: for before he had been offering himself as Cavalere Servante. He said I was "una Donna rara."

'We are going to Vesuvius to-night, as there is a large eruption, and the lava runs down allmost to Porticea. The mountain looks beautiful. One part, their is nothing but cascades of liquid-fire lava. I mean red-hot [lava] runs to a deep cavern, that it is beautiful. But I fancy we shall have some very large eruption soon, as large as that of '67. I wish we may dine to-day at 2 a clock, and so sett of at four. We shall get on our asses at Porticea, and arrive at the top just at dark, and so be at Naples about 2 a clock to-morrow morning.

'Sir William is very fond of me, and very kind to me. The house is ful of painters painting me. He [h]as now got nine pictures of me, and 2 a painting. Marchant is cuting my head in stone, that is in camea for a ring. There is another man modeling me in wax, and another in clay. All the artists is come from Rome to study from me, [so] that Sir William [h]as fitted up a room, that is calld the painting-room. Sir William is never a moment from me. He goes no where without me. He [h]as no diners but what I can be of the party. No body comes without the[y] are civil to me. We have allways good company. I now live upstairs in the same apartments where he lives, and my old apartments is made the musick-rooms, where I have my lessons in the morning. Our house at Caserta is fitting up eleganter this year, a room making for my musick, and a room fitting up for my master, as he goes with ous. Sir William says he loves nothing but me, likes no person to sing but me, and takes delight in all I do, and all I say, to see me happy.

‘Sunday Morning.—We was last night up Vesuvus at twelve a clock, and in my life I never saw so fine a sight. The lava runs about five mile down from the top; for the mountain is not burst, as ignorant people say it is. But, when we got to the Hermitage, there was the finest fountain of liquid fire falling down a great precipice, and as it run down it sett fire to the trees and brushwood, so that the mountain looked like one entire mountain of fire. We saw the lava surround the poor hermit’s house, and take possession of the chapel, notwithstanding it was covered with pictures of Saints and other religios preservitaves against the fury of nature. For me, I was enraptured. I could have staid all night there, and I have never been in charity with the moon since, for it lookd so pale and sickly; and the red-hot lava served to light up the moon, for the light of the moon was nothing to the lava. We met the Prince Royal on the mountain. But his foolish tutors onely took him up a little whay, and did not lett him stay 3 minuets; so, when we asked him how he liked it, he said, “Bella ma poca roba,” when, if they had took him five hundred yards higher, he would have seen the noblest, sublimest sight in the world. But, poor creatures, the[y] where frightened out of their sences, and glad to make a hasty retreat.—O, I shall kill my selfe with laughing! Their has been a prince paying us a visit. He is sixty years of age, one of the first families, and [h]as allways lived at Naples, and when I told him I had been to Caprea, he asked me if I went there by land. Only think, what ignorance! I staired at him and asked him who was his tutor.

‘I left of in a hurry, and [h]as not wrote this ten days, as we have been on a visit to the Countess Mahoney at Ische 9 days, and are just returned from their. We went in a hired vessel, and took all Sir William’s musicians, my harpsichord and master, 4 servants and my maid. I think I never had such a pleasent voyage anywhere. The Countess came down to the seashore to meet ous. She took me in her arms and kissed me, thank’d Sir William for bringing her the company of so beautiful and lovely a whoman. She took ous to her house, where there was a full [company]; and, though I was in a undress, onely having a muslin chemise, very thin, yet the admiration I met with was sur-

prising. The countess made me set by her, and seemed to have pleasure to distinguish me by every mark of attention, and the[y] all allowed the[y had] never seen such a *belissima creatura* in all their life. I spoke Italian to [al]most all, a little French to some that spoke to me in French. The[y] oblinded me to sing. But I got such aplause, that for ten minuets you could not hear a word. I sung four songs, two rondos, a duetto and bravura song of St. Carlo's. The countess gave a great diner the day after to the *noblesse* of the place, where I was: and in the evening an accadema of musick. The[re] was others sung, but I gott all the aplause. I sung one little Italian air, so that they all cried. But on[e] priest, that was their, was so in love with me, that Sir William was oblinded to give him my picture in a snuff-box, and he carries the snuff-box in his breast. This is a priest, mind you!—So every day we stayed we had parties of pleasure, and the poor Countess cried when we came awhay, and I am now setting for a picture for her, in a turkish dress,—very pretty.

‘I must tell you I have had great offers to be first whoman in the Italian Opera at Madrid, where I was to have six thousand pound for three years. But I would not engage, as I should not like to go into Spain, without I knew people their. And I could not speak their language. So I refused it. And another reson was that Galini [h]as been hear from the opera-house at London to engage people: and, tho' I have not been persuaded to make a writen engagement, I certainly shall sing at the Pantheon and Hanover Square, except something particular happens, for Galini says he will make a subscription-concert for me, if I wont engage for the opera. But I wish'd to consider of it. before I engage. Sir William says he will give me leave to sing at Hanover Square, on the condition Galini [h]as proposed, which is 2 thousand pounds. Sir William [h]as took my master into the house and pays him a great price, on purpose that he shall not teach any other person. Their was some of the officers in Captain Finche's ship, that come to our Concerts, whare I sung. They says Miss Hamilton is a fool in singing in comparison to me, and so says Sir William.

‘It is a most extraordinary thing that my voice is totally

altered. It is the finest *soprano* you ever heard, so that Sir William shuts his eyes and thinks one of the *Castratos* is singing; and, what is most extraordinary [is] that my shake, or tril, what you call it, is so very good in every note, my master says that, if he did not feel and see and no that I am a substance, he would think I was an angel Sir William is in raptures with me. He spares neither expense nor pains in anything. Our house at Caserta is all new fitted-up for me,—a new room for my master, a musick-room for me. I have my French master; I have the Queen's dancing-master 3 times a-week; I have 3 lessons in singing a-day,—morning at eight a clock, before diner, and [in] the evening; and people makes enterest to come and hear me. My master goes to England with ous. O, then I give up one hour in the day to reading the Italian. There is a person comes a purpose; and for all this their is now five painters and 2 modlers at work on me for Sir William, and their is a picture going of me to the Empress of Rusho. But Sir William [h]as the phaeton at the door, after I have had my first singing lesson and dancing lesson, and he drives me out for 2 hours. And you will say that's right, for as I study a deal, it is right I should have excercise.

'But last night I did do a very extraordinary [thing]. We gave yesterday a deplomatic diner. So after dinner I gave them a Concert. So I sent the coach and my compliments to the Banti, who is first whoman at St. Carlo's, and desired her to come and sing at my concert. So she came, and their was near sixty people. So after the first quartett, I was to sing the first song. At first I was a little frightened, before I begun; for she is a famous singer, and she placed herself close to me. But when I begun, all fear whent awhay, and I sung so well that she cried out, "Just God, what a voice! I would give a great deal for your voice!" In short, I met with such aplause, that it allmost turned my head. Banti sung after me, and I asure you everybody said I sung in a finer stile than her. Poor Sir William was so enraptured with me! For he was afraid I should have been in a great fright, and it was of consequence that evening, for he wanted to shew me of to some Dutch officers, that was there, that is with a sixty-gun ship and a frigate. The Comodore, whoes name is Melville, was

so enchanted with me, that, though he was to depart the next day, he put it off, and give me a dinner on board, that really surpasses all description. First Sir William and mother went down to the . . . where the long boat was waiting—all man'd, so beautiful! There was the Comodore, and the Captain and four more of the first officers waited to conduct us to the ship. The 2 ships were dress'd out so fine in all the colours; the men all put in order; a band of music and all the marine did their duty, and when we went on board, twenty peices of cannon fired. But as we past the frigate, she fired all her guns, that I wish you had seen it. We sett down thirty to dine,—me at the head of the table, mistress of the feast, drest all in virgin white and my hair all in ringlets, reaching almost to my heels. I assure you it is so long, that I really look'd and moved amongst it, Sir William said so.

'That night there was a great opera at St. Carlo's, in honor of the King of Spain's name-day. So St. Carlos was illumanated, and everybody in great galla. Well, I had the finest dress made up on purpose, as I had a box near the King and Queen. My gown was purple sattin [with] white sattin peticoat trim'd with crape and spangles. My cap lovely, from Paris, all white feathers. My hair was to have been delightfully dress'd, as I have a very good hair-dresser. But for me unfortunately, the dinner on board did not finish till half-past-five, English. Then the Comodore and [officers] would have another bottle to drink to the loveliest woman in the world, as the[y] call'd me at least. I whispered to Sir William and told him I should be angry with him, if he did not gett up to go, as we was to dress, and it was necessary to be at the theatre before the royal party. So at last the[y] put out the boat, to offer a salute from the 2 ships of all the guns. We arrived on shore with the Comodore and five principal officers, and in we all crowd[ed] into our coach, which is large. We just got in time to the Opera. The Comodore went with us, and the officers came next and attended my box all the time, and behaved to me as tho I was a Queen.

'You must know this letter [h]as been begun about 4 months, and I have wrote a little at a time, and I now finish from Caserta, where we have been five weeks. We go to

Naples on the 28 of this month, December, and stay till the Carnaval their, and then return to this place. I believe we shall have a great erruption soon; for tho we are here 16 miles from Naples, yet yesterday the Mountain made such a dreadful noise, just like cannons in one's ears. Sir William and me was yesterday, as ended we are every day, at the Queen's Gardin; and whilst Mr. Greffer and me were talking, all of a sudin their rose such black collums of smoke out of Vesuvos, attended with such roaring, that I was frighten'd, and last night I went on the leads of our house hear, and the [] was such, that I could see Naples by the light of the fire very plain, and after the [] the red hot cinders fell all over the mountain. The Cavaliere Gatty, who arrived here yesterday and is come to stay with ous a week, says the day before yesterday he spoke with Padre Antoine, an old preist, who lives on the mountain, who told him that in a week or fortnight a mouth would open the Portice side, and carry all that place awhay. At least, there is bad signs now.

'I took last night one of my maids, who is a great biggot, to the top of the house, and I shewd her the mountain. But, when she saw the great fire, she fell down on her knees, and cried out, "O Janaro mio Antoino mio." So I fel down on my knees and cried aloud, "O Saint Coala mia, Coala mia." But she got up in a hurry and said, "E bene Signora la vostro Eccellenza non credo in St. Janaro evero." So sais I, "No Teresa evero per" She lookt at me, and said to be sure I read a great many books, and must know more than her. But she says, "Does not God favour you more then ous?" Says I, "No." "O God," says she, "your excellenza is very ungratefull! He [h]as been so good as to make your face the same as he made the Blessed Virgin's, and you don't esteem it as a favour!" "Why," says I, "did you ever see the virgin?"—"O yes," says she, "you are like every picture that their is of her, and you know the people at Iscea fel down on their knees to you, and begd you to grant them favours in her name."—And Greville, its true that the[y] have all got it in their heads I am like the Virgin, and the[y] do come to beg favours of me. Last night their was two preists came to our house, and Sir William made me put the shawl

over my head, and look up, and the preist burst into tears and kist my feet and said, "God had sent me a purpose." Now as I have such a use of shawls, and mine is wore out, Sir William is miserable. For I stand in atitudes with them. As you know Mr. Mack Pherson, ask him to give you one for me. Pray do, for mine is wore out. O pray, send me 4 or 5 prints of that little Gipseyp pictur with the hat on. Sir William wants one, and 2 other people I have promised. I thank you for the boxes. I was enchanted with the hats. The black one was two little. But I have give it to Madam Vonrotelli, a friend of mine hear at court, who admired it. Sir William scolds me for writing so long a letter.—Mind you, your uncle Fred's daughter cant sing so well as me. Tell her so. Pray write to me and tell me, if I shall sing at the Opera or no. We shall be in London this spring twelve months. We are going to Rome this spring. Adio and believe me more your friend then what you are to me—EMMA.

'P.S. I send you a kiss on my name. Its more than you deserve. Next post I write to your Brother—abbout Wite, as he is my freind and I have assisted them a good deal and will more. Pray give my love to your brother, and compliments to Legg, Banks, Tollemache, &c. Tell them to take care of their hearts, when I come back. As to you, you will be utterly undone. But Sir William allready is distractedly in love, and indead I love him tenderly. He deserves it.—God bless you !'

The careful reader of this remarkable epistle will have noted the passage which shows that thus early in her Italian career Emma was entertaining her Neapolitan admirers with her famous attitudes, in which she used shawls with a dexterity that was declared to be marvellous by all beholders of the performances. Her shawls having, in December, 1787, grown shabby through constant use in these dramatic exercises, it may be assumed that Emma had exhibited herself in the *tableaux vivants* from her first arrival at

Naples. In connection with Emma's use of shawls, it may be remarked that she was the originator of the shawl-dance long before the garment was associated with the Empress Josephine, who has been erroneously credited with bringing the shawl into fashion.

Of the Mr. Legge (a member of the Dartmouth family), to whom Emma (omitting the name's final *e*) sent her compliments in the postscript of the long letter, something will be said in an ensuing chapter.

Whilst Emma occupied her villa in Caserta, it was often necessary for Sir William Hamilton to leave her for several days at a time. One of these separations of the idol and her worshipper occurred in 1787, when the Minister went to Naples on Thursday morning, with the intention of returning to his country villa on Saturday night. Two hours can scarcely have passed since he gave her the parting kiss, when Emma dashed off the following letter to the captain of her dreams, though she was certain of seeing him again in less than forty-eight hours:

Emma to Sir William Hamilton at Naples.

‘Caserta : Thursday Morning.

‘I can't be happy till I have wrote to you, my dearest Sir William, tho' it is so lattely I saw you. But what of that to a person that loves as I do. One hour's absence is a year, and I shall count the hours and moments till Saturday, when I shall find myself once more in your kind dear arms, my dear Sir William, my friend, my All, my earthly Good, my Kind home in one, you are to me eating, drinking and cloathing, my comforter in distress. Then why shall I not love you? Endead, I must and ought, whilst life is left in me, or reason to think on you. I believe it is right I should be seperated from you sometimes, to make me know myself, for I don't know till you are absent

how dear you are to me; and I wont tell you how many tears I shed for you this morning, and even now I can't stop them, for in thinking on you, my heart and eyes fill.

'I have had a long walk since I wrote the other side, and feel better for it. I have had a long lesson, and am going now to have another, for musick quiets my mind, so that I shall study much till I see you. I can't finish this subject till I have thankd you, my dearest Sir William, for having given me the means of at least amusing myself a little, if in your absence I can be amused. I owe everything to you, and shall for ever with grattitude remember it. Pray, one little line, if you have time, just that I may kiss your name. I hope you will have had news from England. Take care of your dear self, and that is all that's requested from

'Yours ever affectionate, EMMA.

'P.S.—I send you a thousand kisses, and remember last night how happy you made me and I tell you [on] Saturday night I shall be happier in your presence unmixed with thoughts of parting.'

Regarding him with strong affection before she yielded to his suit, it is certain that Emma had not been Sir William Hamilton's domestic associate for many months without loving him passionately.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOCIAL RECOGNITION.

Emma in the Saddle—Mistress of her Steed—Emma's charming Naturalness—Her Admiration of Others—Diplomatic Management—Mrs. Dickenson Gets 'a Choaking'—Emma's Loyalty to Mr. Greville—Her Trip to the Heel of Italy—'The Fair Gunning'—The Waning Beauty and the Rising Beauty—Honour to the Duchess!—Lord and Lady Elcho—Mr. and Mrs. Legge—The Duchess of Argyll's Death—Madame Le Brun—Her Ingratitude to Sir William Hamilton—'My First Diamonds'—A Reward of Merit?—The King and Queen declare Emma an Example of Feminine Virtue—Emma's Concert and Ball—She is Accepted by Society—Her Determination to become Lady Hamilton—Mr. Legge's Alarm for his Friend's 'Expectations'—He makes Enquiries about Emma—What he Hears to her Advantage and Disadvantage—Balance of Good and Evil.

1787—1791, A.D.

THUS placed in the saddle, from which a fall seemed so probable, Emma rode the steed, that caracoled beneath her, with a self-possession and tact no less remarkable than the pluck and address, that some six or seven years earlier characterised her equestrian achievements at Up Park. Seeing how well she sat and kept her animal in hand, the watchful cavalier at her side soon dismissed apprehension for her safety.

A woman of inferior beauty would doubtless have failed in the enterprise which Fortune had offered to Emma's ambition. But the success, that placed her

eventually amongst the Englishwomen of History, was not wholly due to her loveliness and accomplishments. The personal endowments, that might have provoked the hostility of her own sex, were rendered wholly inoffensive even to the ladies of the English 'colony' by a certain heartiness and simplicity that may be called a charming naturalness. Adventuresses from the ranks usually betray their origin in their imitation of the manners of their social superiors; and maladroit affectation being to fashionable womankind the least pardonable kind of insincerity, the adventuress who is convicted of the heinous offence meets with scant mercy from her feminine censors. No beautiful woman was ever more free than Emma from affectation, and it greatly favoured her fortunes that, on making the acquaintance of gentlewomen, she was far too well pleased with herself, and with the homage rendered to her various genuine endowments, ever for a moment to aim at luring people to admire her for being aught that she was not. The touring English ladies, who were lenient to her slips in English grammar, and even discovered something naively winning in her Flintshire provincialisms, would have regarded the defects far differently had her manner been only a poor imitation of their manner. Possessing something more than a full share of feminine vanity, Emma escaped the usual failing of inordinately vain women, because she never had cause to mistrust her ability to win without artifice all the admiration that was needful for the satisfaction of her self-love. This singular naturalness was the more remarkable because it was allied with the

dramatic genius that, rendering her a consummate mistress of mimicry, and a powerful demonstrator of every variety of emotion, would have enabled her to acquire in all its nicest particulars any manner she cared to assume.

Another quality that favoured her manner and commended her to all people, especially to new acquaintances of her own sex, was her disposition to be pleased with everyone; this disposition being necessarily attended in so emotional a creature with a cordial demonstrativeness of her liking for those whom she liked. Greedy of applause, she was ever prompt to gratify the same appetite in others. When Lady Hamilton covered Mrs. Trench with professions of friendship in the first hours of their brief intercourse the former was altogether natural, and the latter wholly at fault in regarding the complaisances as the mere effusions of flattery. From the outset to the close of the brilliant term of her social career, the famous professional Beauty was no less ready to render than receive approval, and the praise she gave was no less honest than lavish. To the Italian ladies, who, from their ignorance of English, were unobservant of several of her most significant deficiencies, Emma's generous delight in recognising the merits of others was no less conciliatory than it was to the gentlewomen of culture and fine breeding, who noticed her colloquial solecisms, and justly regarded them as indications of her social origin and former position.

From her long letter to Mr. Greville, readers have learned that, besides being domesticated with Sir

William Hamilton, Emma was doing the honours of the British Embassy to its numerous visitors before the close of 1787. No one who failed in the ceremonious courtesy due to her as the mistress of her patron's home was invited again to Sir William's dinners, or to the small gatherings for conversation and music, that were the only evening receptions at the Embassy during four successive years. Of course Sir William exercised nice discretion in sending out cards of invitation to Emma's table and salons. He was too wary a diplomatist and man of the world to invite a rebuff on so delicate a question as Mrs. Hart's fitness for the position to which she had been raised. But to the busybodies who presumed to expostulate with him on his conduct in putting his relation to Emma so prominently before the world, he was no less firm than courteous,—sometimes, perhaps, rather less courteous than firm. When Mrs. Dickenson ventured to write to him on the subject, he gave that severely virtuous matron what Emma called 'a choaking.' Mrs. Dickenson's letter points to the difficulties Sir William Hamilton encountered, and the need he had of all his temper, tact, and discretion in placing his enchantress amongst the leaders of Neapolitan society. On the other hand, that before the end of 1787 she could make a present of an English hat to 'Madame Vonrotelli' points to the progress Emma was already making in the favourable regard of the ladies of the court.

The following letter from Emma to Mr. Greville affords a view of one or two points of her position in Naples at the beginning of 1788 :

Emma to the Hon. Charles Greville.

‘ Caserta : Jany. the 8th, 1788.

‘ MY DEAR GREVILLE,

‘ I just write a short letter to you, to beg of you to send the inclosed to my uncle* at Mr. Potter’s in Harley Street. You can send it by a ticket-porter or the penny-post. But it is of consequence. So don’t fail.

‘ Mr. Saunders came here yesterday, and you may be sure we shall shew him every civility in our power. I believe he was surprised at the stile he saw me in, and the attention that is shewn me, and the magnificence of my dress. He [h]as heard me sing and is astonished at me, both in that and in Italian. But I love to surprise people. The English is coming very fast, and you can’t think how well I do the honors; for Sir William is out every day a-hunting, and the[y] are all enchanted with me. Sir William is really in love with me—more and more. He says he cannot live without me. In short, I am universally beloved. I am singing a duetto now of Paisiellos, that makes every person cry. The beginning of my part is “Per pieta da questo istarte non parlarmi O Dio d’Amor.” I am now rehearsing it, and I am to sing it at the Carnaval. We give a great concert, and I sing it with the first man of the opera.

‘ I am very sorry [that] I have been interrupted by two English gentlemen, who [h]as been to diner here, and Sir William is out a-shooting, and they are just gone; or else I was going to tell you abbout Mrs. Stratford. That Irish wretch wanted to come to Sir William’s. But I have stopt it, or else she would have come to Naples. Sir William wrote to her, and told her that he [k]new nothing of her; that if she came, she might go to a inn; that he had a family of his own that should not be disturbed, and a great deal more. So then she did not chose to come, or else, Greville, she was bring[ing] all her children. But we [k]now her. I have a letter, that came directed to her, and which was opened by mistake by a English lady; and this letter Mrs. Stratford might gain a divorce with; en

* Possibly Emma’s uncle John Moore, whose daughters were living in Moon Street, Liverpool, in 1815.

short, she is, Sir William have found out, she is a common But if she comes, which now she wont, Sir William wont own her.

‘But I will write you the whole History in another letter.

‘God bless you, my dear Greville. I will keep of[f] all things against your interest. But I love Sir William, for he renounces all for me. He [h]as given Mrs. Dickinson a choaking in a letter to-day about me. He told her I was necessary to his happiness,—that I was the handsomest, loveliest, cleverest and best creature in the world, and no person should come to disturb me. So you see, I have a write to love him.

‘Adio. Believe me, yours sincerely

‘EMMA.

‘P.S.—I write in a dreadful hurry.’

Emma’s promise to ‘keep off all things against your interest’ should not escape the reader’s notice. In respect to this promise, which she kept both in spirit and to the letter, at a time when she might have compassed the estrangement of the uncle and nephew, it may be remarked that she justified Mr. Greville’s high opinion of her disinterestedness and generosity.

On the 17th of April, 1789, when her influence over Sir William Hamilton and in the Neapolitan coteries had been growing steadily for almost three years, Emma and her patron started from Naples on an excursion to the heel of the Italian boot. Designed for his satisfaction, the excursion was a tour Sir William Hamilton had wished to make without her company. But Emma was keenly desirous to be one of the touring-party, and urged her wish so steadily and prettily that Sir William was forced to yield to her entreaties. In no degree dissuaded

from her purpose by Sir William's assurance that, of the thirty days he meant to devote to the trip, at least twenty would be passed from morning till night in slow, tedious, irksome journeying over execrable roads, Emma declared it would be a delightful change from her vivid, gay, exciting life at Naples to pass twenty charming days in tedium and irksomeness. To arguments based on the miserable quality of the food provided at the inns of unfrequented districts of Southern Italy, she replied that they could take lots of good things with them. On being told on what poor beds and in what miserable chambers she would have to sleep, she answered, with her own delicious naturalness and a significant smile, that she had in former time slept soundly on beds not chiefly remarkable for luxurious softness.

So Emma had her way, because (to use Sir William Hamilton's words) 'she was so good, there was no refusing her.' And Sir William Hamilton had no reason to regret his concession to the wishes of his enchantress, who added considerably to his enjoyment of the tour of thirty-two days—from Naples to Avellino, Ariano, Bovino, Barletta, Trani, Molfetta, Bari, Taranto (where Sir William bought for 'a song' a large intaglio of the head of Hercules in good Greek sculpture), Cannova (where the connoisseur acquired for a trifle a small intaglio of a head, like Emma's divine head at every point), Nardo, Gallipolia, Lecca (the farthest point south), Brindisi, Polignano, Mola, backward to Bari and Molfetta, and homewards to Naples, by Foggia, Bovino, and Ariano.

The year 1789 was a year of free and somewhat

excessive expenditure with Sir William Hamilton, who, whilst educating Emma still farther out of the simple tastes and economical ways of her old time in Edgware Road, fitted up a superb new apartment for himself, at a cost of nearly £4,000. Emma affected to be jealous of the glories and treasures of these new rooms.

‘Do you really love me, Sir William?’ she often inquired of her idolater. And as often, to his assurance that he loved her completely and passionately, she added, with a bewitching air of jealous curiosity, ‘Ay, but do you love me as much as your new apartment?’ Yet, even at this spring-tide of his delight in his incomparable Emma, when he was already thinking of marrying her, Sir William Hamilton was capable of disguising the real nature of his regard for Emma to one of his closest friends, by stating that, should he at any future time have serious grounds for complaining of her temper or her financial extravagance, he should dismiss her with his blessing and an annuity of £200—*viz.*, £150 a year for herself, and £50 a year for that worthy woman, Mrs. Cadogan.

In the same year (1789), Emma was vastly delighted by the attentions and expressions of womanly fondness that were lavished upon her by the famous Duchess of Argyll, who, with her second husband, the fifth Duke of Argyll, came to Naples in that year. As she has no lower a place than Emma’s amongst the historic British Beauties, this great lady must be commemorated in something more than a single line. The second daughter of John Gunning, Esq., of Castle Coote, co. Roscommon, by his wife the Hon-

ourable Bridget Bourke, Elizabeth Gunning (the younger of the fair sisters of that surname) became, in 1752, the duchess of James, the sixth Duke of Hamilton, who died on the 17th of January, 1758. In the following year (1759) the widow of this princely duke gave herself in wedlock to another overpoweringly great Scotch duke,—John, the fifth Duke of Argyll. This duchess of two several Scotch dukes was created a peeress of Great Britain in 1776, as Baroness Hamilton of Hambledon, in Leicestershire. What greatness for an Irish squire's daughter to achieve by the rare and signal beauty, that passed with her to both of the stately houses into which she married, and through them has been transmitted to other exalted families!

A beauty by the contrivance of Nature, this duchess, who achieved so much with her fine endowments, had always been animated by sympathetic enthusiasm for women whom she would have regarded merely as her rivals, had her personal charms been unattended by singular sweetness of disposition; and now that she was nearing the somewhat premature end of her brilliant career, this still lovely woman was reminded tenderly of her own girlish graces by the noble form, the delicately-bright complexion, the classic head, and the profuse tresses of the young adventuress, whose charms had long been familiar to her through Romney's art. Of course she had heard things to Emma's discredit, but Elizabeth Gunning, with three coronets on her brow, was of far too generous and lofty a nature to be incapable of making charitable allow-

ance for the errors of women less fortunate than herself. Had Emma's record been blotless, it would have mattered nothing to the Duchess of Argyll that she was a servant's daughter, and had herself been a servant. But the record being what it was, the large-hearted woman of rank discovered excuses for Emma's slips and slidings in those circumstances of her humble birth, which she would otherwise have deemed worthy of consideration.

It is pleasant, and in no slight degree beneficial, to recall the generous and tender interest taken by the waning beauty in the young woman, whose loveliness was still in process of development. Wintering at Naples, in 1789—90, the Duchess of Argyll took to her heart this girl of the people, and by her manifestation of the pleasure she found in Emma's society certainly did much to confirm Sir William Hamilton in his purpose of marrying her. At the same time Lord and Lady Elcho were at Naples, and during the winter of 1789—90 Emma's intimacy with the Duchess of Argyll and Lady Elcho was an affair of remark in all the English sets. Some months later, during the intercourse of Lord and Lady Elcho with Mr. and Mrs. Legge in Switzerland, the latter couple (then *en route* for Italy) were informed, or conceived themselves to have been informed, by their homeward-wending acquaintances that Emma was certainly married to Sir William Hamilton, though the union was kept secret, because the British minister feared its publication might result in official embarrassment and annoyance, which he naturally wished to avoid. Indeed, unless Mr. and

Mrs. Legge misunderstood or inferred too much from what was of course said to them in confidence, Lady Elcho did not make Emma's personal acquaintance, till she had been assured on good authority that the rumour of a secret marriage was a true rumour.

It being not only improbable, but wholly beyond belief, that Sir William Hamilton gave such an assurance to either Lord or Lady Elcho, or to any other person, it may be assumed that Mr. and Mrs. Legge either misunderstood, or inferred too much from, what was said to them on the interesting subject, or that Lord and Lady Elcho spoke somewhat too freely. The matter may, of course, be explained in various ways, without impugning anyone's veracity. Having a high regard for the Duchess of Argyll, whom as a whilom Duchess of Hamilton he regarded as in some degree a member of his own domestic connection, Sir William Hamilton no doubt spoke confidentially to her about his relation towards Mrs. Hart. Though, in this confidential talk, he was not the man to tell an untruth to the lady on a subject in respect to which he was especially bound to be truthful to his confidante, Sir William may have declared his intention to marry Emma, as soon as he should receive the King's permission to do so, or should be otherwise freed from official obligations that at present forbade him to take the step. Such an assurance from a man of honour would be enough to determine a woman of the Duchess's high and generous spirit to act towards Emma as though Sir William's purpose had been already accomplished. And further, if the Duchess, after making Emma's

acquaintance, told her friends (the Elchos) that she had done so in consequence of a satisfactory explanation made to her by Sir William Hamilton, it would be only natural for Lord and Lady Elcho to regard the Duchess's statement and action as sufficient grounds for believing the rumour of the secret marriage.

Anyhow, it is certain that, whilst seeing something of Lord and Lady Elcho during the winter of 1789—90, Emma saw a great deal of the Duchess, who may be said to have taken her under her wing. In the middle of the next ensuing winter, the famous beauty of the peerage died on the 20th of December, 1790. In the following month (January, 1791), Emma wrote to Mr. Greville, 'You may think of my affliction, when I heard of the Duchess of Argyll's death! I never had such a friend as she, and that you will know, when I see you and recount to you all the acts of kindness she showed me, for they were too good and numerous to describe in a letter.' Whilst it cannot be questioned that the Duchess of Argyll's countenance was greatly serviceable to Emma in the winter of 1789—90, by disposing English ladies of considerable influence, though of less exalted rank, to espouse the cause of the Beauty still striving for greater social recognition, it is certain that the Duchess's 'good and numerous acts of kindness' were powerful in determining Sir William Hamilton to marry Emma in 1791. Many things might be told yet again to Elizabeth Gunning's honour: but of them all, none smells sweeter or blossoms brighter in the dust of a dead century

than her brave and sympathetic goodness to Emma Hart.

At no long interval from the Duchess of Argyll's departure from Naples, Madame Le Brun, the French artist, came to Ferdinand's capital in search of an asylum from the perils and troubles that had thickened about her in her own distracted country. It was in accordance with Sir William Hamilton's care for artists in adversity that he called promptly on the French lady, and invited her to take Emma's portrait. This proposal was made so soon after Madame Le Brun's arrival at Naples that Sir William had reason for thinking the lady had not received any earlier commission in the Italian capital. According to Madame's own ungracious account of the business in her '*Souvenirs*,' Sir William's suggestion was that her *first* portrait, taken at Naples, should be a picture of Emma. Accepting the offer, the artist painted Emma as a Bacchante, reposing on the seashore, and holding in her hand a cup. 'Her lovely face,' says Madame Le Brun, 'was very animated. She had an enormous quantity of beautiful chestnut hair, which, when loose, completely covered her: thus, as a Bacchante, she was perfect.' For this portrait Sir William paid the lady 2,400 francs—£96 in English money.

If ever a patron of the fine arts deserved the gratitude of an artist, the patron to merit thanks was Sir William, who visited the lady so quickly and seasonably, and the artist to render the thanks was Madame Le Brun. The sum paid for the picture, close upon a hundred pounds,—a sum that went a long way in

Paris and a still longer way in Naples a century since—was liberal payment as prices of pictures went in the last century. The commission was given to the exile at the very moment of her arrival in a foreign capital, where she had still to form a connection of employers. The commission thus graciously given came to Madame Le Brun from the first connoisseur in Naples, who had more power than any other person in the capital, to bring her into vogue;—from the connoisseur whose countenance was all that the able painter required, in order to be confident that her sojourn amongst foreigners would be financially successful.

Of course, Madame thought herself a fortunate woman at the moment. Yet in the ‘*Souvenirs*’ she carps and plucks at Sir William Hamilton’s reputation in respect to this affair of business, averring that he haggled with her about the price, and paid her far less than she deserved. All this the lady demonstrated to her own satisfaction by remarking that Sir William afterwards sold the picture in London for three times what he gave for it. It did not occur to the lady how greatly the picture after leaving the easel increased in marketable value, from causes having no connection whatever with her artistic ability. On its sale in London, the mere announcement that it was a work from Sir William Hamilton’s collection was enough to raise the marketable value of any picture to twice the sum of the painter’s full payment. Moreover, the picture was painted before Emma had become widely known, and was sold after she had become one of the most celebrated women

of all Europe. The value of the picture, when it came to be sold in London, was due to the purely artistic merit of the picture, the rare beauty of the subject, the reputation of the connoisseur, and the world-wide celebrity of Lady Hamilton. That, under these circumstances, the picture fetched no more than three times the payment to the painter, instead of disposing one to think Madame Le Brun was underpaid, points to the opposite conclusion.

To Emma the year 1790 was an *annus mirabilis* of her career, for a circumstance that should be noticed in the present chapter. On rising from the ranks, with an ambition to shine in society, a beautiful adventuress always longs for diamonds. Yearning for them chiefly from a desire to heighten her attractiveness, she also desires to display them as a symbol of power. Diamonds are to such a woman what land is to men of ordinary ambition. Just as the fortunate adventurer who has made a fortune invests a considerable part of his wealth in broad acres, in order that his prosperity may be exhibited in the most substantial form to the envious world, the fortunate adventuress acquires the dazzling stones, in order that their lustre may declare her richer than ordinary women. In this respect, Emma resembled other women of her kind. Admiring the brilliant stones, she had for some time longed for the day when she should be able to speak of 'my diamonds.' Again and again she had proclaimed her admiration of diamonds to her patron, and under his observation had stood admiringly over diamonds in jewellers' shops before turning away from them with a sigh.

In short, the young woman (who, ten years later, according to Mrs. Trench, ‘showed a great avidity for presents, and actually obtained some at Dresden by the common artifice of admiring and longing’) had, in 1790, often begged Sir William Hamilton to give her diamonds, without ever putting the entreaty in direct words, when she at length received from his hand a first instalment of her heart’s desire in a lot of single stones of good water and fair size, for which he paid £500. In imagining the splendour of the gift, readers must bear in mind that Sir William was a connoisseur of diamonds, and a good hand at bargaining with dealers in articles of *virtu*, and that £500 went much further in buying diamonds a century since than it goes at the present time.

For some days Emma was a supremely happy young woman. At length she could speak of ‘*my diamonds*,’ and wear them. She had no doubt previously come into possession of a few of the admirable stones. Whilst allowing her no more than £200 a year for her own and her mother’s dress-money and personal expenses, Sir William had been in the habit of making presents to her,—a gown, a ring, a feather, as occasion suggested. And doubtless some of the rings that thus came into her possession were set with brilliants. But, till he gave her this five hundred pounds’ worth of stones, Emma cannot be said to have been the possessor of *diamonds*.

The exact date of this handsome gift does not appear. But it was made in 1790 (probably in the summer of that year), and may have been given as a reward of merit, soon after it came to Sir William’s

delighted ears that Ferdinand and his queen had been speaking of the Signora Hart as a rare example of feminine propriety and virtue, whom the ladies of the Neapolitan nobility would do well to imitate! On hearing that their Majesties had spoken thus graciously and wisely of Emma, Sir William knew that it was in his power to plant his enchantress in the inner ring of the ladies about Maria Caroline. Knowing this, it would, under all the circumstances of the case, have been strange had Sir William deferred for any long time to take the one step that would place Emma amongst the ladies of the Neapolitan court.

Emma's position at Naples having gone on improving steadily for more than four years, Sir William decided at the close of 1790 that at the turn of the year she should exercise larger hospitality, and instead of giving small evening parties to a carefully selected circle of friends should on ordinary evenings invite from fifty to sixty people, men and women, and every now and then throw open her *salons* to the whole body of her increasing army of friends. At the first of these grand receptions—for a concert and ball—given in January, 1791, Emma had the satisfaction of seeing her *salons* thronged by nearly four hundred people, some of whom were personages of high rank and the highest fashion. The foreign ministers were present with their wives. Ladies of light and leading at court, and several of the highest dignitaries of state, with their ladies, vied with one another in displaying their regard for the English signora, who had already won a place in Maria

Caroline's esteem, though she had not yet been formally permitted to come to Her Majesty's presence. The number, quality, and demeanour of the eminent and brilliant people declared emphatically that, after due deliberation and circumspection, the *élite* of the Neapolitan *beau monde* desired, in the fullest sense of the words, to live in cordial friendliness with the Signora Hart. The significance of this show of respect for Emma, who, in a ball-dress of white satin, did the honours of her home with admirable tact, discretion, and cordiality, was not lost on the several English ladies who were amongst 'the four hundred.' Having seen with their own eyes how acceptable Emma had become to the diplomatic circle and to Italians of the highest rank and brightest reputation, it was not in the power of these ladies a few months later to aver that, in marrying his mistress and taking her back to Italy as his wife, Sir William Hamilton had outraged social sentiment, and was doing injury to the English residents at Naples.

That Emma in no degree exceeded the limits of historic truth, when writing to Mr. Greville of the success of what she styled 'the first great assembly given publicly' by Sir William and herself, appears from the accounts given of the same affair by English people who were witnesses of her triumph, and had no disposition to exaggerate its completeness and significance. What she wrote of the matter to Mr. Greville appears in the following letter :

From Emma to the Hon. Charles Greville.

'Naples : Jany. []th, 1791.

'I received your oblidging letter on thursday, and am

sensible of the part you take in my happiness and welfare. I have not time to-day to answer to all the points in your letter but will [by] the next post. You may think of my afflictions, when I heard of the Duchess of Argyll's death. I never had such a freind as her, and that you will know, when I see you and recount to you all the acts of kindness she shewd to me; for they were two good and numerous to describe in a letter. Think then to a heart of sensibility and gratitude, what it must suffer.

‘ You need not be affraid for me in England. We come for a short time, and that time must be occupied in business, and to take our last leave. I don't wish to attract notice. I wish to be an example of good conduct, and to show the world that a pretty woman is not allways a fool. All my ambition [is] to make Sir William happy, and you will see he is so. As to our seperating houses, we can't do it, or why should we? You can't think 2 people, that [h]as lived five* years with all the domestick happiness that's possible can seperate, and those 2 persons, that knows no other comfort but in each other's compny, which is the case I assure you with ous, tho you bachelors don't understand it. But you can't imagine 2 houses must seperate ous. No, it can't be, and that you will be a judge of, when you see us. We will let you into our plans and hearths (*sic*). Sir William will let you know on what a footing we are here. On Monday last we give a concert and ball at our hous. I had neer four hundred persons,—all the foreign ministers and their wives, all the first ladies of fashon, foregners and Neapolitans. Our house was full in every room. I had the band, the tenor Cosacelli and others to sing. Sir William dress'd me in wite sattin; no coller about me but my hair and cheeks. I was without powder. As it was the first great assembly we had given publickly, all the ladies strove to out-do one another in dress and jewels. But Sir William said I was the finest jewel amongst them. Every night our house is open to small partys of fifty and sixty men and

* Usually overstating periods of time, Emma overstates this term. Barely four years and nine months had elapsed since she came to Italy, and more than six months of the time she had lived with her mother in the apartment, not in Sir William's house.

women. We have musick, tea, &c., &c.; and we have a great adition lately to our party. We have a new Spanish Ambassador; and his wife and me [h]as made a great frendship, and we are allways together. She is charming. Think then, after what Sir William [h]as done for me, if I should not be the horriddest wretch in the world, not to be exemplary towards him. Endead, I will do all I can to render him happy. We shall be with you in the spring, and return heer in November, and the next year you may pay ous a visit. We shall be glad to see you. I shall allways esteem you for your relationship to Sir William, and having been the means of me knowing him. As to Sir William, I confess to you I doat on him. Nor I never can love any other person but him. This confession will please you, I know. I will write more next post.

‘EMMA.’

Something more must be said of Mr. and Mrs. Legge, who in Switzerland spoke with Lord and Lady Elcho about Emma's relation to Sir William Hamilton, for the purpose of ascertaining whether it would be well for Mrs. Legge to accept civilities from the famous Beauty.

The same member of the Dartmouth family to whom Emma sent her remembrances in the post-script of her four months' letter to Mr. Greville, Mr. Legge had often dined with her in Edgware Road. Having known her intimately during her Paddington time, he was possibly familiar with the chief facts of her whole London story; and through her husband's communicativeness Mrs. Legge was no doubt aware that, before living with Sir William Hamilton, Emma had lived with Sir William's nephew. Though by no means a strait-laced woman, albeit prudently thoughtful for the social proprieties, Mrs. Legge felt she had more need of caution, in respect

to Sir William's enchantress, than most of the other Englishwomen touring to Naples. Knowing too much of Emma's career to be a ready believer of the whispers about a secret marriage, Mrs. Legge also bethought herself that her husband's intimacy with Mr. Greville was no secret in London, and that a considerable number of Londoners were cognizant of his familiar acquaintance with Mr. Greville's whilom mistress. It was therefore obvious to Mrs. Legge that, after knowing Emma in Italy, she could not on returning to London pretend to have made her acquaintance in ignorance of her London career. Should it be needful for her to defend herself against the tattlers about her friendship with Mrs. Hart, the wife of Mr. Legge could not say that, in the absence of all grounds for thinking ill of the lovely young woman, she had believed the story that the young woman was Sir William's wife, though considerations of diplomatic and official policy forbade him to avow his union with a person who—unutterably beautiful creature though she was—had clearly come from very humble people. Nine out of ten touring ladies might safely say this, in explanation of their unfortunate mistake in exchanging civilities with Mrs. Hart. But Mr. Legge's wife would not say it without jeopardizing her character for veracity.

On parting from Lord and Lady Elcho in Switzerland, the Legges journeyed southward, in perfect disbelief of the secret marriage story. After passing some time in the north of Italy, they made a rather long stay at Rome. At the end of November, 1790, they arrived in Naples, where they tarried some

fourteen weeks. It points to the pains taken by Sir William Hamilton to draw English ladies of position and unexceptionable character within Emma's lines, that he wrote to the Legges, whilst they were still at Rome, assuring them that nothing would afford Mrs. Hart greater pleasure than to contribute in any way to the restoration of Mrs. Legge's impaired health. Mrs. Hart's hope was that she should see much of Mrs. Legge during her stay at Naples, and should be allowed, either as nurse or companion, or in both capacities, to render every service in her power. The invalid, of course, expressed herself duly sensible of Sir William's kindness. But she held to her determination to have nothing to do with Mrs. Hart. Taking what was the best course even on so delicate a subject, Mrs. Legge took the course of perfect candour to the Ambassador. Whilst hoping to see him on their old footing of mutual friendship, she thought that, under all the circumstances of a rather embarrassing affair, she had better not make Mrs. Hart's acquaintance.

Showing no offence at the rebuff that must have annoyed him, Sir William Hamilton, who probably in his heart respected the lady for her firmness and frankness, treated her with equal good temper, good sense, and courtesy. Calling upon her as soon as she appeared upon the scene, he called upon her repeatedly throughout her stay of rather more than fourteen weeks at Naples, but refrained from making another attempt to draw her into friendly intercourse with Emma. It was, of course, to the diplomatist's interest to put Mrs. Legge on her honour to refrain

from talking in Naples to Emma's disadvantage. But even diplomatists sometimes lose sight of their interest, and act imprudently, when they are nettled. If it was adopted from prudential motives, Sir William's course towards Mrs. Legge achieved its ends. Certainly Emma suffered in no degree from Mrs. Legge's tongue, which was not at any time wanting in charity and forbearance. Nor did she suffer in any appreciable degree from Mrs. Legge's refusal to make her acquaintance, for, as Mrs. Legge was a great invalid, the state of her health accounted to the English colony for her never appearing in public with Emma and Mrs. Cadogan.

Whilst dealing thus prudently with Mrs. Legge, Sir William Hamilton received and treated her husband so cordially, that he was glad to avail himself of every opportunity of entering Emma's home. During his long stay at Naples, he never in any week called less often than twice at the Minister's house, when it was Emma's practice to receive him with every show of cordiality, and to speak to him with a trustful communicativeness that altogether accorded with her expressions of delight at seeing him again. For a time her manner to Sir William and Sir William's bearing to her disposed the visitor to think that after all the rumour of a secret marriage might be true. But an end was put to this disposition when, in Emma's absence, he summoned up courage to ask Sir William whether the marriage had been solemnized. To this point-blank question Sir William replied with an unequivocal negative, but went on to hint that possibly there

would be a marriage, should he ever discover he was at perfect liberty to act in accordance with his inclination. To Mr. Legge it was manifest that Sir William was no less honest in the hint than in the denial.

After speaking thus directly to Sir William on the delicate subject, Mr. Legge spoke with similar directness to Emma, as to her hope for and inclination towards a more legitimate union with her patron. Instead of repelling his curiosity, or rallying him on its impertinence, Emma told him without any hesitation that she both wished and hoped to be Lady Hamilton. Yet further, in a subsequent conversation (for she spoke on several occasions to Mr. Greville's particular friend Legge on this interesting topic) Emma declared that she meant to be Lady Hamilton, and had no doubt whatever that, in the course of a few months, she should be Lady Hamilton. Sir William and she should be going to England in the spring. If he did not marry her in Italy, before they started for England, he would marry her in London. If he returned to Italy without marrying her,—But there was no need to say what would happen, if he returned to Italy without marrying her; for if he did not marry her soon after they got to England, it would be so because he had already married her in Italy. It did not surprise Mr. Legge to hear her talk in this decided way, because he had already heard she had told several people in Naples, that Sir William was going to take her to England, in order to get the King's permission to marry her, and would bring her back to Italy as his wife.

Talking to her as an old friend and familiar counsellor, Mr. Legge tried to dissuade her from her purpose, and to make her see that the marriage, on which she had set her heart, would not be for her happiness. The marriage would not better her position at Naples, where she already knew the best and highest people. It would not add to the luxury and stateliness and elegance of her manner of living. Giving her no additional power, it would impose on her several vexatious restraints. As the British Ambassadress, she would soon find herself on a less easy footing with some of her most agreeable acquaintances. She would be less free to know people, simply because she liked them. On the other hand, she would be required to weary herself in paying attention to stupid grandees, who would bore her extremely. Social sentiment would require her to forego some of her favourite amusements. As Ambassadress, she could not exhibit her beautiful attitudes. As Ambassadress, she might sing her serious and classical songs, but it would be impossible for her to sing and act in the comic parts, that were amongst her most telling enactments. No, no, she had better remain Signora Hart, and dismiss her ambition to become Lady Hamilton.

This was Mr. Legge's opinion. But, with a smile and a merry laugh, Emma told him he knew little about Italy, and nothing about her real interests. She had been a mere Mistress long enough and yearned to be a Wife. She was resolved to escape from a position that, kind and considerate and generous though the Neapolitan ladies were to her, exposed

her to incessant slights and mortifications. She had made up her mind to be Lady Hamilton; and as Lady Hamilton she should know whatever people she liked, perform whatever attitudes she pleased, and be as comic as ever in her lighter songs. Marriage would make her fonder and more devoted than ever to her dear Sir William, and make her in half-a-hundred ways much happier, without working any change in her amusements, pleasures, friendships.

Observing how set she was on marriage, and how in his attachment (ay, his dotage) to her Sir William Hamilton assented to her every wish, agreed with whatever she said, and applauded everything she did, Mr. Legge could not doubt that Emma would achieve her ambition, unless strong and extraordinary measures were taken to save the Minister from the worst possible consequences of his infatuation. Though he admired Emma greatly, and thought she had improved vastly in figure, complexion, features, style, air, everything, during her residence in Italy, Mr. Legge cared less for her than for his dearest friend, Charles Greville. Where would *he* (Charles Greville) be, if this subtle, irresistible syren had her way in this business? What would become of *the* nephew's succession to the Welsh estate, if Emma became Lady Hamilton? Having persuaded Sir William to marry her, she would persuade him that honour and love required him to leave his lands, moneys, pictures, and everything he had, to his widow. Mr. Legge determined to warn his friend, Charles Greville, of the ruin with which his 'expectations' were threatened, and of the need there was for strong,

prompt, and extraordinary measures to avert the approaching ruin.

I do not suggest that Mr. Legge set to work at hunting up matters to the discredit of the young woman, whom he admired greatly and liked cordially. I am confident that he was incapable of reporting to her injury anything he knew to be false, or did not believe to be true. But, in his zeal to serve his friend, Mr. Legge resolved to learn all he could discover about Emma, so as to give Mr. Greville a complete view of the whole position. And it is certain that, in the execution of this friendly and altogether honourable design, Mr. Legge did gather all the information he could respecting Emma during his long stay in Naples. People were ready enough to talk to him about her. Now and then people, whilst extolling her for divers good qualities, said against her what they should have kept to themselves. For instance, Aprili, her singing-master, broke professional confidence in telling Mr. Legge, of course in strict confidence, that, though her voice was a strong and noble organ, she had not a good ear,—a statement notably in accordance with what Mrs. Trench and Goethe wrote of her musical capacity in later time. But Mr. Legge heard no worse thing said of her by anyone, apart from the fact of her known relation to Sir William Hamilton.

Had there been any other stories to her discredit floating about Naples, they would certainly have come to Mr. Legge's ears; and as certainly he would have passed them on to his friend Mr. Greville. But, wherever he went, Mr. Greville's friend heard good

reports of Emma Hart. She was kind to the poor, thoughtful for her servants, assiduous in pleasing all who approached her, no less gracious and considerate to her inferiors than to her equals. In some way or other she had everyone's good word. Even her censors amongst the English ladies admitted, that she was as inoffensive and *generally* meritorious as a young woman in her particular and most reprehensible position could be.

The account Mr. Legge ultimately gave of her to her former protector was greatly in her favour. She had grown far more beautiful, did the honours of her house with singular tact, was on terms of intimacy with ladies of the highest ranks, had won golden opinions amongst the corps diplomatique, and had so endeared herself to the man whom it was her duty to honour above all other men, that he made her happiness his first consideration. All Mr. Legge could urge against her was that she had a defective ear for music; that her manners, though extremely charming, were still wanting in conventional refinement; that she was set on marrying Sir William Hamilton; and that she would certainly achieve her grand ambition, unless Mr. Greville took prompt measures to save himself from becoming her nephew.

CHAPTER XIV.

EMMA IN ENGLAND AGAIN.

Romney in Gloom—Romney in Elation—Emma's Reappearance in Cavendish Square—'She Prides herself on having been Mr. Romney's Model'—Sudden Relapse into Melancholy—The Appeal to Hayley—The Poet's Prescription—Emma's Return to Town—Sunshine again in Cavendish Square—Mr. Beckford of Fonthill—'Vathek' entertains Emma—Her second Visit to Fonthill—Mr. Beckford's Scheme for making himself a Peer—The King's Consent—Was he Asked for It?—Romney's great Party—Emma's Wedding at Marylebone Church—Queen Charlotte refuses to receive Lady Hamilton—Lady Hamilton in Paris—Maria Antoinette's Benignity—Misconception touching its Consequences—Lady Hamilton at the Royal Palace of Caserta—Lady Malmesbury's nice Distinction—Lady Hamilton's Letter to Romney—Her Gratitude for her Elevation.

1791 A.D.

THE great Romney had for weeks been suffering from the nervous trouble that, gradually overpowering his intellectual faculties, reduced him in the course of years to absolute fatuity, and he was possessed by an appalling fear that his artistic talents would soon pass from him for ever, when, at the close of May or the beginning of June, 1791, there came to his darkened mind a vision of joyful loveliness, that lifted him in a moment from the deepest gloom to the brightest elation. The delightful vision was also a delightful reality. The painter's 'divine

lady' had returned from Italy to England, and one of the first visits she paid, after reappearing in London, was this visit to her old friend in Cavendish Square. Like a daughter, returning to the arms of a fond father after a long absence, she embraced and kissed the artist, with a show of tender emotion that delighted Sir William Hamilton, who was a witness of the greeting. Far more beautiful than she was when Romney bade her 'farewell' in the March of 1786, the 'divine lady' was habited in a Turkish dress that became her peculiar loveliness. Eloquent of tenderness, her face was radiant with joy; for she hastened to Cavendish Square with tidings which she knew would render her dear Mr. Romney unutterably joyful. Sir William Hamilton and she had come to England to be married. On returning to Naples a few months hence, she would go thither as Lady Hamilton. In making this announcement to the friend, who knew everything of his divine lady's darkest days, Emma shed tears. Hayley says they were 'tears of lively gratitude.' No doubt that generous sentiment was largely accountable for them. But other feelings were in action.

Gladdening Romney with her presence and good news, she made him still happier by saying that, of the several pleasures she had been anticipating for weeks, the pleasure of being again his model was not the least. Of course she should have many things to do in the short time of her stay in England. There were visits for her to pay in the country. In London, now that she was about to become a great lady, friends would come about her, to whom she

must of course give much of her time. The arrangements for her marriage would be engaging her attention. But in every hour spared to her by manifold distractions, she should come, *if she might come*, to the dear old studio, in which she used to pass happy hours. On hearing that Hayley was already at work on the painter's 'Life,' she hoped the poet would tell the world that 'she prided herself in having been Mr. Romney's model.'

It shows the steadiness of Emma's affections, and the sterling soundness of her heart in its innermost chambers, that she went thus quickly and spoke thus cordially to her old friend. Had she been the mere vulgar adventuress Mrs. Trench imagined her, she would have acted differently. An ordinary adventuress, on the eve of her marriage to a famous British Minister, would have invited Mr. Romney to call on her, and have deemed herself magnanimous in repaying the painter's former civilities with airs of patronage. Emma went to him with her heart in her hand, saying, 'Think of me now, in the season of my triumph, as you thought of me in the days of my humility; be good to me in your old way, and let me be to you again precisely what I used to be—your model.'

No angel's visit to a house of sorrow was ever more seasonable and fruitful of good than Emma's visit to her sick friend in Cavendish Square. Putting the 'blue devils' to rout, it raised the painter at once from lethargy to alertness, and re-endowed him for a brief while with his perfect powers. On the 19th of June, 1791, Romney wrote to Hayley:

‘At present, and the greatest part of the summer, I shall be engaged in painting pictures from the divine lady. I cannot give her any other epithet, for I think her superior to all womankind. I have two pictures to paint of her for the Prince of Wales. She says she must see you, before she leaves England, which will be in the beginning of September. She asked me if you would not write my life. —I told her you had begun it:—then, she said, she hoped you would have much to say of her in the life, as she prided herself in being my model. So you see I must be in London till the time when she leaves town.’

Eighteen days later (7th of July, 1791), Romney wrote to the same correspondent:

‘I dedicate my time to this charming lady; there is a prospect of her leaving town with Sir William, for two or three weeks. They are very much hurried at present, as every thing is going on for their speedy marriage, and all the world following her, and talking of her, so that if she had not more good sense, than vanity, her brain must be turned.

‘The pictures I have begun, are Joan of Arc, a Magdalen, and a Bacchante, for the Prince of Wales; and another I am to begin as a companion to the Bacchante. I am also to paint a picture of Constance for the Shakespeare Gallery.’

It is not surprising that, soon after the divine lady’s departure for the country, the artist—already sore stricken by the fearful malady that eventually destroyed him—dropped from gladness to gloom almost as suddenly as he had risen, at her spell, from gloom to gladness. In the misery, which had no cause but physical disease, the wretched painter conceived a notion that he had somehow offended the divine lady, and fallen from her esteem, that shortly before leaving town she had grown cold to him, and that she might never again regard him with favour. In his distress at these morbid fancies, the invalid

wrote, on the 8th of August, 1791, to his deplorably insufficient friend, Hayley :

‘ MY DEAR FRIEND,—As you will probably wonder at my silence, it will be necessary to give some account of the cause. In my last letter I think I informed you that I was going to dine with Sir William and his Lady. In the evening of that day, there were collected several people of fashion to hear her sing. She performed, both in the serious and comic, to admiration, both in singing and acting ; but her Nina surpasses everything I ever saw, and I believe, as a piece of acting, nothing ever surpassed it. The whole company were in an agony of sorrow. Her acting is simple, grand, terrible, and pathetic. My mind was so much heated that I was for running down to Eartham to fetch you up to see her. But alas ! soon after, I thought I discovered an alteration in her conduct to me. A coldness and neglect seemed to have taken the place of her repeated declarations of regard for me. They left town to make many visits in the country. I expect them again the latter end of this week, when my anxiety (for I have suffered much) will be either relieved or increased, as I find her conduct. It is highly probable that none of the pictures will be finished, except I find her more friendly than she appeared to me the last time I saw her. I had it in contemplation to run down for a day or two, before she returned to town, to bring you up with me, and I mentioned it to her. She said do so, but in a cold manner, though a fortnight before, when I said I would do so, she was very desirous that I should bring you to town. You will see everything is in great uncertainty, but it may turn out better than I expect.’

Had Hayley been the sufficient and serviceable friend that he imagined himself to the painter, he would have seen at once that Romney had fallen again under the sway of hypochondria, and was being fretted by an imaginary misfortune. Hastening to town from Eartham (no very long journey), he would have gone to Cavendish Square, and with kindly

words have urged his friend to reflect how beset the divine lady was by new applicants for her attention and new interests, and would have entreated him to forbear from suspecting her of fickleness and caprice, because in a moment of mental pre-occupation she had been something less demonstrative than usual of her affectionate regard for him. After luring him into a happier frame of mind, he would have rallied him on his weakness in surrendering himself so readily to fanciful troubles. Knowing all about Romney's mental weakness, Hayley was without excuse for failing to see that the distressing imaginations were the offspring of his nervous infirmity. Even if he had seen grounds apart from the invalid's words for thinking Emma had been guilty of the coldness and neglect, the poet should have refrained from doing aught to confirm the sufferer in his painful view of her behaviour. Hoping that another change in the Beauty's demeanour would in a few weeks justify the counsel, he should have instructed the artist to attribute his distress to emotions of his own fancy, and to acquit the divine lady of misconduct.

Hayley acted in the matter just like Hayley,—who was far from being a sagacious person, though he was a gentleman of some culture and refinement, and could once in a while turn off a decent verse. Accepting Romney's narrative of Emma's unkindness as veracious history, Hayley regarded her as a fickle and capricious young woman, who would recover her former good temper if her vanity were tickled by some of Mr. Hayley's elegant verses. The thing to

be done was for him to compose a few flattering rhymes, and direct Romney to send them to her in his own handwriting. Pleased with the verses, the Beauty would smile again on the painter, who, cheered by the renewal of her favour, would be able to work again on the canvases which he now feared he should never have heart to finish.

Acting on this priggish thought, Mr. Hayley wrote and sent to Romney these precious verses :

‘ Gracious Cassandra ! whose benign esteem
To my weak talent every aid supplied ;
Thy smile to me was inspiration’s beam,
Thy charms my model, and thy taste my guide.

‘ But say ! what cruel clouds have darkly chill’d
Thy favour, that to me was vital fire ?
O let it shine again ! or worse than kill’d,
Thy soul-sunk artist feels his art expire.’

The notion that Emma’s regard for her old friend could have been affected by this jingle about ‘ vital fire ’ and ‘ art expire ’ is exquisitely ridiculous !

Even in the darkness and imbecility of his illness, Romney was sufficiently master of himself to be in no hurry to transmit the absurd effusion to Emma : and he must have congratulated himself on forbearing to soothe her with what would have been little less than an insult, when the divine lady, a few days later, re-appeared in Cavendish Square with a face that showed him the utter groundlessness of his panic. On Monday evening, August 29th, 1791, Romney wrote to Hayley,

‘ MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have not had it in my power to write any satisfactory answer to your first letter till within these few days. Cassandra came to town the 16th, and I

did not see her till the 20th, so you may suppose how my feelings must have suffered: she appointed to sit on the 23rd, and has been sitting almost every day since; and means to sit once or twice a day till she leaves London, which will be about Wednesday or Thursday in the next week.

‘When she arrived to sit, she seemed more friendly than she had been, and I begun a picture of her, as a present for her mother. I was very successful with it; for it is thought the most beautiful head I have painted of her yet. Now indeed, I think, she is as cordial with me as ever; and she laments very much that she is to leave England without seeing you.

‘I take it excessively kind in you to enter so deeply into my distresses. Really my mind had suffered so very much that my health was much affected, and I was afraid I should not have had power to have painted any more from her; but since she has assumed her former kindness, my health and spirits are quite recovered.

‘She performed in my house last week, singing and acting before some of the nobility with most astonishing powers; she is the talk of the whole town, and really surpasses everything both in singing and acting that ever appeared. Gallini offered her two thousand pounds a year, and two benefits, if she would engage with him, on which Sir William said pleasantly that he had engaged her for life. —Believe me, yours most affectionately, G. R.’

One of the places visited by Sir William Hamilton and Emma during their stay in England was Font-hill Abbey in Wiltshire, where they were received by ‘Vathek’ Beckford with the splendour and state that always distinguished his hospitalities to the few people of distinction, who had the courage to accept them in that period of his career. As Mr. Beckford was, through his mother (*née* Maria Hamilton), a great-grandson of James, sixth Earl of Abercorn, who was Sir William Hamilton’s maternal grand-

father, the ill-reputed author of 'Vathek' was first cousin, one degree removed, to Emma's patron. Whilst the more fastidious and self-respecting of the English *beau monde* held aloof from 'Albion's wealthiest son,' Sir William Hamilton, at no time of his career a rigid moralist, had always maintained the friendliest relations with his cousin Beckford, who, in the summer of 1791, was only too glad to show his loyalty to Sir William Hamilton by lavishing courtesies on Sir William's enchantress. To Emma, who probably knew nothing whatever of the cloud that covered Vathek's reputation, and was certainly quite ignorant of the nature of the darkest rumour to his discredit, this visit was superlatively delightful. The stately house with its galleries abounding in choicest works of art, the nobly timbered parks with their ornamental water, the terraces and gardens, the conservatories, that gave employment to half-a-hundred servants, were regarded with joyful admiration by the Beauty, who in her visits to Italian grandees had never rested in a home so grandly beautiful and eloquent of power, dignity, and taste. Nor had she any cause to contrast the number of the servants with the fewness of the guests. For, though he in one sense lived alone, the millionaire of Fonthill could veil his isolation with a show of being in society. Equipt with Mr. Beckford's accomplishments, taste in the elegant arts, charming manner, conversational brilliance, and overpowering wealth, a far greater sinner than the millionaire of Fonthill was rumoured to be would have two or three hundred people of good birth and breeding, to speak of him

as the victim of prejudice and slander, and to accept his invitations, in spite of all that was whispered against him. At Fonthill Emma did not display her attitudes and sing her songs to thinly-peopled rooms, but to a throng of agreeable persons of both sexes, who enjoyed their host's epicurean dinners all the more, because his rare wines and the achievements of his incomparable *chef* were flavoured with a sense of their own magnanimity in rallying round a friend who was so cruelly misjudged by his censors.

So to Emma, who had never heard aught to Mr. Beckford's shame, and did not know enough of English society to rate at their precise worth the pleasant folk she met within his bounds, the visit to Fonthill was so altogether delightful that, something more than six and a half years later (23rd February, 1798), she could write in grateful remembrance of it to her husband's cousin: 'As we shall soon be in England, what pleasure it will be for us to come to dear Fonthill, to walk [and] talk together, and you to ciceroni us to your Great Towers, your Little Towers, your riding [school], in short to all your improvements . . . Nor shall I ever forget the happy days we pass'd at Fonthill, and I hope we shall still pass many more.'

The promise of these last words was kept by Emma in later time, when she journeyed to Fonthill for a second time, with the great Nelson at her side. Something will be said of this second visit to Wiltshire in a subsequent chapter, where something will also be said of Vathek Beckford's curious scheme for making Emma a peeress and himself a peer by the same Letters Patent.

That Emma's social success during her few weeks in London was quite as brilliant as Romney represented to Hayley appears from the evidence of more reliable witnesses than the divine lady's limner-in-chief. It was no idle talk that Gallini offered her two thousand pounds a year, and two yearly benefits, if she would be *prima-donna* at his opera-house. Indeed, he had in former time offered her the two thousand, without the benefits. And it cannot be questioned that, notwithstanding the slight defectiveness of her 'ear,' the manager would have been a gainer from the compact, had his offer been accepted. To the score or so listeners, with fine and nicely critical hearing, the defect would have been a serious diminution of their enjoyment; but to the thousands, who would have applauded her madly for her beauty, her rare dramatic genius, and the undeniable goodness of her strong voice, it would have mattered nothing that once in a while she was something too high in her higher notes.

Whether George the Third was ever asked expressly to sanction his ambassador's marriage, the present writer is unable to say. Possibly Emma's talk in Naples of Sir William Hamilton's purpose of asking for the King's consent was mere talk, in which she indulged at Sir William's instance, for the satisfaction of Neapolitan sentiment. But there are grounds for thinking it probable that, if the sovereign's permission was not expressly sought and obtained, Sir William Hamilton did not marry Emma till he had indirectly sounded the royal mind on the subject, and had ascertained that he could follow his

inclination without jeopardising his official position. Amongst his several friends about the Court, George the Third's foster-brother had a near relative, occupying an important position in the household, who had the king's ear and confidence, and was often a channel of irregular intercourse between the sovereign and his representative at Naples. Possibly this relative was serviceable to Sir William in learning what the King thought of the contemplated union.

What the King thought, if he condescended to think at all, about the matter, few people will question. As to the propriety of the step, considered apart from Sir William's position, the King, who was so signal a patron and promoter of the domestic virtues, would necessarily be of opinion (if of any opinion) that his foster-brother should marry the woman, to whom he was so strongly attached. As to the purely official question, it is difficult to see on what grounds the King could object to the marriage on that score, as Neapolitan society had already accepted the lady, and the Queen of Naples was prepared to receive her, as soon as she should be Sir William Hamilton's wife. It could not be to the injury of the King's interests, or to the injury of his lieges at Naples or anywhere else, that a woman so acceptable to the court and society of Naples should be the wife of his representative there. Under these circumstances, George the Third, if he was sounded on the matter, of course answered to the effect, that Sir William Hamilton could do his pleasure, without incurring his master's disapproval.

The party at Romney's house, mentioned in the

artist's letter (of 29 August, 1791), was followed at a brief interval by Emma's wedding to Sir William Hamilton, which was solemnized at Marylebone Church on the 6th of September 1791, when she signed the registration of the marriage with the name of Amy,—a signature that has hitherto perplexed her historians, because they were unaware that Amy was the name given to her by her god-parents at her baptism in Great Neston church. The persons to act as 'witnesses' of the union were the Marquess of Abercorn and Mr. Dutens.

In one particular only was Lady Hamilton's stay in England less triumphant than she hoped it might be. She had been 'the rage of the town' for several weeks of a London season, she had been welcomed to the drawing-rooms of not a few of the highest aristocracy, her songs and 'attitudes' had been passionately applauded by fashionable throngs, she had been flattered by Princes of the blood royal; but Queen Charlotte refused to receive her at court, though powerful influence was used to induce Her Majesty to waive, in the Beauty's favour, a wholesome and necessary rule, touching the presentations of gentlewomen at St. James's. For her firmness in this particular few readers of this page will hesitate to commend Her Majesty.

Soon after their marriage, Sir William and Lady Hamilton returned to Italy, travelling thither by way of Paris, where they rested for several days, and were received with significant indications of favour and confidence by Marie Antoinette, the sister of the Queen of Naples. The clever writer of the 'Temple

Bar' article (Oct. 1884) on 'Emma, Lady Hamilton,' says 'Marie Antoinette, *who probably knew* nothing of Lady Hamilton's previous history, granted her an interview, *it is said*, and entrusted her with a letter—the last she wrote—to her sister, the Queen of Naples.' There is no lack of evidence that Lady Hamilton was received with a peculiar show of regard by Marie Antoinette; but most readers of this chapter will think it the reverse of probable that the French Queen was so uninformed of Lady Hamilton's history in the September 1791, as the able essayist would have us imagine. The curious notion that Lady Hamilton was indebted to Marie Antoinette for her introduction to Maria Caroline of Naples was accepted as good history by the 'Blackwood' essayist (April, 1860), who says unhesitatingly, 'A letter from the unhappy Marie Antoinette (said to have been the last she addressed to her sister) secured her an introduction to the Queen, who soon admitted her to the closest intimacy and utmost confidence.' That Lady Hamilton did not gain access to the Queen of Naples through Marie Antoinette's goodness, there is no need to assure the readers of this page, who will soon be invited to consider more particularly Maria Caroline's reasons for taking Lady Hamilton under her especial protection.

Lady Hamilton had no sooner returned to Naples than she became one of the ladies whom Maria Caroline delighted to honour. Within a fortnight of that return, she was dining at the royal palace of Caserta, where she met Lord and Lady Malmesbury, the latter of whom soon afterwards wrote her sister, Lady

Elliot, of the adventuress,—‘Lady Hamilton really behaves as well as possible, and quite wonderfully considering her origin and education. The Queen has received her very kindly, as Lady Hamilton, though not as the English Minister’s wife; and I believe all the English here mean to be civil to her, which is quite right.’ This great lady’s way of stating the case is very amusing. Having refrained from offering personal civilities to Lady Hamilton, whilst she was only the English Minister’s mistress, the Queen of Naples invited her to Caserta, immediately she became Sir William Hamilton’s wife. In doing so the Queen of Naples did no more than, it had been many months since intimated to Sir William Hamilton, she would do. The Queen’s chief motive for this benignity to Lady Hamilton, was that she *was* the English Minister’s wife. Yet Lady Malmesbury (who, no doubt, was *technically* right on the point of etiquette) could gravely write in confidence to her sister, that Lady Hamilton was not received by Her Majesty of Naples ‘*as the English Minister’s wife.*’ The fun of the affair is heightened by the announcement of the charitable purpose of the Neapolitan English (‘I believe all the English here mean to be civil to her, which is quite right’), as though English residents and tourists had not condescended to be civil to the Mrs. Hart, who during the winter of 1789-90 had been the especial friend and favourite of the Duchess Argyll and the familiar companion of Lady Elcho. The Neapolitan English were well represented at Mrs. Hart’s ball and concert in the January of 1791. ‘All the English here mean to be

civil to her.' The time had come for Lady Hamilton to be civil to them. And she *was* abundantly gracious to them!

The year 1791 closed to Emma with an act that redounds to her honour. Overflowing with gladness at the kindnesses lavished upon her by Queen of Naples, and with happiness at the attentions shown her by the Neapolitan English, Lady Hamilton wrote this remarkable letter to her old friend, Romney,—

Lady Hamilton to Romney, the Painter.

'Caserta: Dec^{br} 20th, 1791.

'MY DEAR FRIEND,

'I have the pleasure to inform you we arrived safe at Naples. I have been received with open arms by all the Neapolitans of both sexes, by all the foreigners of every distinction. I have been presented to the Queen of Naples by her own desire. She [h]as shown me all sorts of kind and affectionate attentions. In short, I am the happiest woman in the world. Sir William is fonder of me every day, and I hope he will have no cause to repent of what he [h]as done; for I feel so gratefull to him, that I think I shall never be able to make him amends for his goodness to me. But why do I tell you this? You know me enough. You was the first dear friend I opened my heart to. You ought to know me, for you have seen and discoursed with me in my poorer days. You have known me in my poverty and prosperity, and I had no occasion to have liv'd for years in poverty and distress, if I had not felt something of virtue in my mind. Oh, my dear Friend! for a time I own through distress my virtue was vanquish'd. But my sense of virtue was not overcome. How gratefull now then do I feel to my dear, dear husband, that [h]as restored peace to my mind, that [h]as given me honer, rank, and what is more innocence and happiness. Rejoice with me, my dear Sir, my friend, my more than father. Believe me, I am still that same Emma you knew me. If I could forget for a moment what I was, I ought to suffer.

Command me in anything I can do for you here. Believe me, I shall have a real pleasure. Come to Naples, and I will be your model:—anything to induce you to come, that I may have an opportunity to shew you my gratitude to you. Take care of your health for all our sakes. How does the pictures go on? Has the Prince been to you? Write to me. I am interested in all that concerns you. God bless you, my dear Friend. I spoke to Lady Southerland about you; she loves you dearly. Give my love to Mr. Hayly. Tell him I shall be glad to see him at Naples.

‘As you was so good [as] to say you would give me the little picture with the black hat, I wish you would *unfrill* (?) it and give it to Mr. Duten. I have a great regard for him. He took a deal of pains and trouble for me; and I could not do him a greater favour than to give him my picture. Do, my dear friend, do me that pleasure; and, if there is anything from Naples, command me.

‘We have a many English at Naples as Ladys Malmsbury, Malden, Plymouth, Carneigee, Wright, &c. They are very kind and attentive to me. They all make it a point to be remarkably civil to me. You will be happy at this, as you know what prudes our Ladys are. Tell Hayly I am always reading his “Triumphs of Temper.” It was *that* that made me Lady H[amilton], for God knows I had for 5 years enough to try my temper, and I am affraid, if it had not been for the good example Serena (?) taught me, my girdle would have burst; and if it had, I had been undone, for Sir William more minds temper than beauty. He therefore wishes Mr. Hayly would come, that he may thank him for his sweet-tempered wife. I swear to you I have never been once out of humour since the 6th of last September. God bless you. Yours,

‘E. HAMILTON.’

That, in this outpouring of affection and gratitude to ‘her dear friend, her more than father,’ Lady Hamilton in her brightest season of triumph referred thus frankly and pathetically to what was most ill in her early story, shows what a good, genuine, essen-

tially generous creature she was. Queen Charlotte was quite right in not permitting her to enter St. James's Palace. Indeed, as life went a hundred years since, it would have been highly regrettable had the Queen of England been less firm. But in 1791, Her Majesty admitted to her presence many a woman who had done far worse things than Lady Hamilton, without ever being stirred by the womanly sentiment that pervades this noble, though ill-written letter from the British Minister's wife to her old friend in Cavendish Square. Romney, at least, had reason to think and speak of her as 'the divine lady.'

CHAPTER XV.

THE QUEEN'S FAVOUR AND FAVOURITE.

Maria Caroline of Naples—Marie Antoinette of France—Characteristics of the Queen of Naples—Her Beauty and Mental Endowments—Her strong Will and Thirst for Power—Her Authority and Unscrupulousness—Peculiarities of her Regnal Position—Ferdinand's Weakness—The Queen's Motives for favouring Lady Hamilton—Badness of the Neapolitan Government—Its Redeeming Trait—The Queen's Prescience and Sagacity—Lady Hamilton's real Relation to the Queen—How the Queen makes use of the British Minister's Wife—Historical Misconceptions—Nelson's famous Codicil to his Will—His Estimate of Lady Hamilton's 'Services' to her Country—True View of those 'Services'—Its Consequences to her Reputation—Fact more favourable than Fiction to Lady Hamilton.

1791 A.D.

A DAUGHTER of the famous Maria Theresa, Maria Caroline of Naples inherited a larger share of her mother's beauty than her sister Marie Antoinette of France, who in the hey-day of her charms was nothing more than an elegant and personable princess, though pictures, so fanciful that they might almost be styled fictitious, and the romantic glamour that clothes her with divers imaginary graces, have invested her with loveliness no less remarkable than her misfortunes. Possessing a form and presence that were admirable for their queenlike dignity, and

features whose feminine sweetness was the more effective from being allied with an air of resoluteness that indicated a spirit not incapable of severity and even of ruthless cruelty, the Queen of Naples was so rarely endowed with personal attractiveness that, had she been the offspring of peasants, she would have risen to rule in a palace by virtue of her beauty.

In other respects, nature was more liberal to Maria Caroline than to Marie Antoinette. Whilst the latter, without the lessons of the sorrow that visited her in her later time, would at best have been nothing more than a rather amiable and altogether frivolous woman, satisfied with the flattery of her worshippers, the amusements of her court, and the right of reigning over the ladies of her brilliant entourage, Maria Caroline was inspired, even from her girlhood, with her mother's pride and intrepidity, a keen appetite for power, a dominating temper, the strongest desire to distinguish herself as a reigning woman, and the intolerance of opposition that never fails to attend so aspiring a spirit. Nursing this ambition, from the hour of her marriage to Ferdinand of Naples in 1768, even to the season of utter defeat and humiliation that closely preceded her death from grief and rage in 1814, she had the knowledge and nerve, the mental force and moral faculties, everything but the favourable circumstances and conditions, that were needful for its achievement. Spelling no better than Lady Hamilton, though by no means deficient in the culture afforded by books, she was a nice and shrewd student of human nature: and studying all people with reference to her interests,

she valued them in proportion as they were capable of serving her ends. A mistress of dissimulation, she was a mistress of all the arts of queen-craft. Tenaacious of her resolves, she was a jealous guardian of her own secrets, and so self-confident, that, though habitually affecting to seek and accept counsel, she never in the whole course of her chequered career took advice from man or woman. How high an opinion Napoleon had of the capacity of this queen, who so often baffled his dearest schemes and enterprises, is seen from the ferocity with which he used to speak of the princess whom he habitually designated 'Fredegonda.' But, if Nature was less benign, Fortune and Fate were more propitious to Marie Antoinette. Whilst Fortune gave her the grander theatre, where she was an actress under the whole world's gaze, Fate gave her the tragic ending that has enshrined her in every feeling heart. Of every thousand persons who have wept over Marie Antoinette's wrongs, scarcely one has shed a tear for the rage-broken heart of her more nobly-endowed sister, who, under circumstances favourable to her ambition, might have been remembered, like Catherine of Russia, for her greatness, without being, like Catherine, remembered also for her licentiousness.

From a loathsome literature, stories might indeed be raked in evidence that, in this last respect, the Queen of Naples resembled the Empress of the North. But persons of common sense, to say nothing of common charity, are slow to credit aught that may be written by her manifestly vindictive enemies, to the defamation of an eminent woman. And, recol-

lecting the purport and quality of one of the most revolting imputations on Maria Caroline, the English, of all the peoples on the earth's surface, should be the slowest to accept a dubious tale to the discredit of her feminine delicacy.

For the advantage of readers who would realise the nature of Lady Hamilton's relation to Maria Caroline, and see how strangely it has been misrepresented by successive biographers, something must be said of a most peculiar feature of what may be designated the Queen's regnal position. By the laws of Naples, every Queen-Consort of the country, on giving birth to an heir to the throne, was entitled to sit in the Council of the State and have a voice in its deliberations. This right was claimed by Maria Theresa's daughter as soon as she was qualified to exercise it; and strange would it have been had she delayed to enter on a privilege so congenial to her spirit and needful for her ambition. Occupying this seat, and having this voice, the Queen, whose husband was wholly under her influence, and wholly indifferent to affairs of state, so long as they neither interfered nor threatened to interfere with his two chief sources of enjoyment, became, in fact, the Queen-Regnant of his realm. At Naples politicians rose to be ministers because they had her favour; and the ministers who fell into disgrace with her either lost their offices or held to them under equally vexatious and humiliating conditions. The Queen's hand was in every department, her eye saw every state-paper that was of the slightest importance. During the earlier years of her reign, the minister who ven-

tured to oppose her imperious will soon paid the penalty of his rashness. In later time, when the growing power of the French party, which she regarded with unqualified detestation, constrained her to pursue her ends with less candour and high-handedness, she adhered to her own policies with undiminished resoluteness, the only difference in her action being that she did with concealment the things that she would rather have done openly. Regarding the chiefs of the Neapolitan 'French party,' and all persons suspected of being tainted with revolutionary sentiment, as wicked Jacobins, who ought to be working in chains, she deemed it her duty to cajole and trick them, until the happy moment should arrive when she would be able to send them to the galleys or the hangman. Absolutely unscrupulous, in respect to the obligations resting upon her as a member of the Privy Council, she showed secret despatches to the very persons from whom the Council were most desirous to keep the contents of the writings. If a treaty were made to her secret disapproval, she did not hesitate to take clandestine steps for rendering it ineffectual. If a clause of a treaty interfered with the success of any project she had especially at heart, she dipped her pen in ink, and, with a warrant under her sign-manual, instructed one or more of her subordinate officers to do her pleasure, without regarding the clause.

The only person to modify the imperiousness of a Queen-Consort, with so peculiar a privilege by the law of the country into which she had married,

would have been a husband of sound intellect and strong will. But Ferdinand had no will of any kind on matters apart from pursuits of the chase and the table, and no intelligence superior to the sagacity needful for success in those pursuits. General P  p   (Memoirs, vol. i, p. 9) wrote of him, ‘He was both by nature and education weak, strongly addicted to pleasure, and utterly incapable of opposing himself to the strong mind of the young queen, who soon discovered the character of her husband.’ Reading his character thus readily, the clever woman saw no less quickly how to manage the king, whose prime minister (Sir John Acton, the French-born English baronet) remarked of him, that he was a good sort of man, because Nature had not given him the faculties requisite for the making of a bad man. Showing him every sign of conjugal affection, she encouraged him to leave his affairs of state in her hands, and to expend his energies in the pastimes for which he was naturally fitted. When he returned from a day’s hunting, with a long face and the doleful intelligence that he had killed nothing nobler than a wild cat, her face and voice were eloquent of sympathetic sadness. When he returned from the chase with good news, she was eager for particulars, and uttered exclamations of delight on hearing the precise weight of the largest boar that had been slain. Is it surprising that Ferdinand left the government of the country to so exemplary a wife and so wise a queen?

By her lawful position and her perfect sway of so manageable a husband, Maria Caroline was for all

practical purposes an autocrat, and she exercised her power all the more fearlessly and thoroughly, because, whilst putting no limitations on her authority, the peculiar conditions under which she ruled her husband's realm exempted her in a great degree from the restraining sense of individual responsibility to social sentiment, which usually tempers the tyranny of absolute despots.

That the government, which thus passed to the hands of Maria Theresa's daughter, had the faults of all governments of its seriously defective kind is certain. But it may be questioned whether its iniquities were not exaggerated at the beginning of the present century by the several English writers who judged the Neapolitan tyranny from the misleading reports of its French enemies. It was the fashion of these scribes to say that the government, which was upset by foreign invaders co-operating with a small minority of the Neapolitan people, and replaced for a few months by the Parthenopeian Republic, surpassed all the other European governments of its period in evil qualities. Southey wrote roundly of the condition of affairs, for which Maria Caroline was more than any other living person accountable, that 'the vilest and most impudent corruption prevailed in every department of the state, and in every branch of the administration, from the highest to the lowest'; and it cannot be denied that, allowance being made for rhetorical fervour, Southey could have demonstrated the substantial accuracy and justice of his vehement words. On the other hand, it cannot be gainsaid that, if the Neapolitan govern-

ment was the worst example of misrule in 1798, it was so because a far worse example had a few years earlier been swept away by the revolutionary storm, of which the revolution of Naples was the mere sympathetic consequence. When all that can be fairly urged has been fully urged against the misrule of Ferdinand's dominions, the fact remains that it was a misrule, in which the Lazzaroni and all the humbler people of Naples cordially acquiesced, and that the internal revolutionary movement which drove him for a while to Palermo originated amongst people whose sufferings were not urgent, and whose discontent with the existing state of things was mainly due to the revolutionary fervour and ferment of France. It is recorded in history how, when the King and his family had retired to Sicily, the Lazzaroni perished by thousands in the vain defence of his capital, and resisted its invaders with an heroic resoluteness that was a consequence of their enthusiastic devotion to the reigning family.

To account for this singular contentment of the poorer classes with a government against which they had just grounds for complaint, it may of course be remarked that penury is less afflicting and exasperating to the people of a country where even the beggars for several months of the year bask or loiter in the sunshine, than it is to the inhabitants of lands with a less genial climate. The southern sun contributed in other ways to the contentment of the poor. Food was cheaper and more abundant in southern Italy than in colder countries. It was greatly to the advantage of the government, though

in no degree to its credit, that for months together the lowest of the Neapolitan populace lived on what are dainties to the poor of northern lands; that they fed sufficiently on macaroni and oil, figs, melons, and grapes. They could also indulge with moderation in a cheap wine, that is a delicious beverage in comparison with the muddy beer that quickens the dull nerves of the English labourer. But when all account is taken of circumstances for which no praise is due to the rulers of the people, it remains that, instead of being besieged by famine-goaded mobs clamorous for food, Ferdinand's palace was regarded affectionately by the poor of his capital, so long as he tarried in it, and that when he had retired to Sicily the Lazzaroni prayed for his speedy return. No doubt it was a bad rule. But, with all its badness, the government to which the poorest populace were so strongly attached cannot have been altogether without redeeming traits.

Watching keenly the course of events in France, during the years which Emma Hart spent as Sir William Hamilton's mistress, Maria Caroline, with the prescience and sagacity of a reigning woman, foresaw the universal storm whose approach was heralded by the convulsions of a single country. Of the particular events and most conspicuous actors in the coming storm, she of course had no foreknowledge; but she knew the troubles of France would soon give birth to troubles throughout Europe. Apprehensive for the immediate safety of her sister of France, she was thoughtful for her own and her children's interests in a near future. Under these

circumstances, the Queen of an almost maritime realm looked to the greatest naval power of Europe as the power whose friendship she most needed. She had ever regarded affectionately the power whose soldiers, in the most perilous crisis of her mother's fortunes, had won the battle of Dettingen for Maria Theresa. Her best chance of weathering the great European storm lay in the good-will of the northern Court that was mistress of the seas. An English fleet in the Mediterranean—an army moving rapidly hither and thither on the wings of the wind—would give her greater security than any number of troops marching slowly to her assistance from Austria. In the troublous times that were approaching she must look to England for succour and protection.

Taking this view of her position and needs, Maria Caroline determined to be more assiduous than ever in cultivating the good opinion of Great Britain, and in placing herself and her doings in the most favourable light to the Court of St. James's. For this end she determined to do everything in her power to gratify the Minister, who had already represented the British sovereign at her court for more than a quarter-of-a-century, and would probably continue to do so for another ten or even fifteen years. Acceptable as a keen sportsman to her husband, Sir William Hamilton had for other reasons been no less acceptable to herself. The relations between herself and the Minister of many accomplishments had always been friendly, but soon she might need the aid of a minister who should regard her with warmer feelings than those of mere official friendliness.

Knowing all about his attachment (his 'dotage,' as Mrs. Legge called it) to the Signora Hart, the Queen saw that she should win his cordial gratitude by avowing her regard for the beautiful young woman, and by causing the ladies of the Court to give her their countenance. No sooner had Signora Hart become Lady Hamilton than Maria Caroline decided to make the British Ambassador her partizan and devoted servant by honouring the woman he worshipped. The Queen's recognition of the lady who had so lately been the British Minister's mistress, was a mere act of queen-craft; and throughout all her subsequent intercourse with the Englishwoman, who quickly became her familiar associate, Maria Caroline was actuated by policy and a queenly regard for her own interests.

Receiving Lady Hamilton at her court, in order to attach the British Minister more strongly to her cause, Maria Caroline soon conceived a liking, little different from affection, for the lovely Englishwoman who showed herself duly grateful for the royal favour. Soon also the Queen discovered she could use Lady Hamilton as a safe and secret channel of communication with the British Ambassador, and also as a discreet agent on matters having no reference to English sentiment. Having made this discovery, Her Majesty soon found it convenient to act upon it. As the years passed, Lady Hamilton received more and more often from the Queen's lips messages on matters of state to her husband, and brief notes containing scraps of political information for his guidance, till she became, as it were, the pen with which Maria Caroline wrote

Sir William Hamilton's despatches to the London Foreign Office. In this way the Queen maintained a close and almost daily correspondence with the British Minister at times, when the jealous suspicions and fervour of the French party in Naples made it politic for him to refrain from appearing at Court.

Whilst thus using the Minister's wife, Maria Caroline bore herself to Lady Hamilton with a friendliness that was supremely delightful to the adventuress, whom she even honoured with a large measure of unqualified confidence. But, though it may have no qualification, the trust which a Queen places in a serviceable agent may have limitations. The confidence accorded to Lady Hamilton by the Queen of Naples was at all times strictly limited by Her Majesty's definite conception of her own royal interests. Honouring the beautiful Englishwoman for uses she had of her, Maria Caroline never fell under the control of the favourite, who, from the first hour to the last day of their long intimacy, was nothing more to Maria Theresa's daughter than an agreeable companion and serviceable instrument.

To Lady Hamilton's injury, a different and altogether erroneous view of her relation to Maria Caroline was taken by the writers who were the earliest and noisiest supporters of her title to the gratitude of her country. To magnify her services and commend her claims for pecuniary recompense to the British Treasury, these indiscreet friends maintained that, by force of her rare endowments, she gained over the Queen of Naples an overpowering influence, which she steadily exercised for the advantage of the British

navy, and on several successive occasions used so adroitly as to extort from Her Majesty secrets of the highest diplomatic moment, whose prompt transmission to the London cabinet was fruitful of great good to the British people. According to these scribes the victory of St. Vincent was a direct result of Lady Hamilton's promptitude in sending to Lord Grenville a copy of the private letter, in which the King of Spain announced to his brother of Naples his purpose of deserting England and joining hands with France—a letter which the Queen of Naples was supposed to have secretly abstracted from her husband's cabinet in order to show it to the irresistible Lady Hamilton, from whom she could not withhold any matter of importance. In the same way it was asserted that the battle of the Nile would never have been fought and won had it not been for Lady Hamilton's complete ascendancy over the Queen of Naples, whom she constrained to write the secret warrant to the Governor of Syracuse, which enabled Nelson to get supplies for his ships and renew his search for the French fleet without an hour's avoidable delay. Thus credited with a share in the greatest successes, Lady Hamilton was in the same manner extolled for contributing to the minor triumphs of the British navy.

It is the less surprising that Lady Hamilton's 'friends' succeeded in imposing this extravagant estimate of her 'services' on historians who abominated her, no less than on the multitude of loose thinkers who were predisposed to regard her with admiration, because it was a view that accorded with the prevailing sentiment of the British navy, and was

in general harmony with Nelson's opinion of her claims to the gratitude of the nation. Three generations since it was less usual than it is now-a-days for sailors to search for the secret sources of political action. For their justification in calling her the Patroness of the Navy (the title of honour accorded to Lady Hamilton, in the first instance, by Sir John Jervis) it was enough for Nelson's comrades to be assured that the British Minister's wife could do what she liked with the Queen of Naples and was quick to help them whenever they came within the range of Neapolitan influence and had need of her assistance. It seldom occurred to any of these gentlemen that, instead of doing what she liked with the Queen of Naples, Lady Hamilton only did what the Queen instructed her to do, and would have lost her influence at the Palazzo Reale in an hour, had she ventured to use it against Maria Caroline's personal policy and overbearing will. As it never occurred even to Nelson, with all his sound common-sense and homely shrewdness, to take this true view of Lady Hamilton's relation to the Queen, readers need not wonder that seamen of inferior sagacity believed that their Patroness was as powerful in the Royal palace as fame declared her.

Nelson, indeed, never made the mistake of attributing the victory of St. Vincent to Lady Hamilton's promptitude in sending to Lord Grenville her copy of the Spanish king's letter to the King of Naples. On the contrary, in the famous codicil to his last will, whilst praying that she might be fitly rewarded for her action in this particular matter, he expressly

stated that the promptitude was not fruitful of any such consequence. Here are the words of the codicil on this point, ‘Whereas the eminent services of Emma Hamilton, widow of the Right Honourable Sir William Hamilton, have been of the very greatest service to our King and country, to my knowledge, without her receiving any reward from either our King or country:—first, that she obtained the King of Spain’s letter, in 1796, to his brother, the King of Naples, acquainting him of his intention to declare war against England; from which letter, the Ministry sent out orders to then Sir John Jervis, to strike a stroke, if opportunity offered, against either the arsenals of Spain, or her fleets. That neither of these was done, is not the fault of Lady Hamilton. The opportunity might have been offered.’ But though his accurate knowledge of the sequence and relation of incidents saved him from conceiving that Lady Hamilton’s intelligence was accountable for the battle of St. Vincent, Nelson committed the graver mistake of imagining that, had it not been Lady Hamilton’s influence with the Queen of Naples, he would not have made himself glorious by defeating the French at Aboukir. ‘Secondly,’ he wrote in the same historic codicil, ‘the British fleet, under my command, could never have returned to Egypt, had not Lady Hamilton’s influence with the Queen of Naples, caused letters to be wrote to the Governor of Syracuse, that he was to encourage the fleet being supplied with every thing, should they put into any port in Sicily. We put into Syracuse, and received every supply, went to Egypt, and destroyed Fleet.’

In a subsequent chapter, it will be shown more at length how strangely Nelson misapprehended the nature of Lady Hamilton's relation to the royal lady, whom she used to style her 'own queen' and 'royal mistress,' and how greatly he exaggerated the importance of the part she played in this particular business. For the present it is enough to say, that Lady Hamilton never gained any political information from her 'royal mistress' above and apart from the information which the Queen gave of *her own accord* and for the attainment of *her own ends*; that Maria Caroline never gave Lady Hamilton any information without duly considering whether the giving it would be advantageous to herself; and that, had Lady Hamilton been absent from Italy throughout 1798, Nelson would all the same have received Maria Caroline's warrant to the Governor of Syracuse, although Captain Troubridge would have received the secret letter through another channel.

At first sight it may appear, that to deprive Lady Hamilton of all the peculiar honour hitherto accorded to her for signal services to her country, is to do her historic reputation a great and irreparable injury. But on consideration it will appear to every reader that, if it strips her of her strongest and indeed her only title to grateful commemoration, this new and true view of her place and influence in the Neapolitan Court relieves her of the infamy of crimes, for which as a mere puppet and instrument she cannot be justly held accountable, and dissipates the reasons why she should be remembered with execration. Upon the whole, she gains far more than she loses from the

realistic historian, who, withholding from her the applause to which she is not entitled, relieves her of the obloquy she never merited. So long as she is regarded as the woman who did what she pleased with Maria Caroline in affairs of foreign politics, she will continue to be regarded as the prime instigator and director of the stern and repulsive measures, that, on the fall of the Parthenopeian Republic, were used for the punishment of the most culpable actors in the short-lived revolution. And to all humane and judicial readers of the generally accepted story of her Italian career, it must appear that the credit, which has come to Lady Hamilton from being erroneously supposed to have contributed indirectly to the victories of St. Vincent and Aboukir Bay, is insignificant in comparison with the infamy that has ensued to her from the no less erroneous notion, that she was largely, if not chiefly, accountable for the executions that attended and followed Ferdinand's return to Naples in 1799.

CHAPTER XVI.

HIGHER YET AND HIGHER.

Lady Hamilton in her Perfection—Her Delight in ‘good Cheer’—Her Care for her first-born Child—Arrangements for the Girl’s Future—She passes from View—Sir William Hamilton’s dangerous Illness—Sympathy of ‘the Court’ and ‘Society’—Lady Hamilton’s Thoughtfulness for her Grandmother Kidd—Maria Caroline’s Letter to Lady Hamilton—The Dauphin’s Portrait—Life at Caserta and Naples—Lady Hamilton’s Prudence in Prosperity—Her Troops of Friends—Her Demeanour to the Diplomatic Ladies—She sings in Duets with King Ferdinand—Captain Nelson at Naples—His Introduction to Lady Hamilton—‘The Saviours of Italy’—Nelson at the Neapolitan Court—‘The young Woman of Amiable Manners’—Her Kindness to Josiah Nisbet—Sir William Hamilton’s second Illness—Failure of his Constitution—His Premature Old Age.

1792—1793 A.D.

It has been already remarked, that Lady Hamilton’s beauty attained to its perfection shortly before her marriage to Sir William Hamilton, when she was twenty-eight years of age and he had entered his sixty-second year, and that the period of its perfection lasted for about five years, when suddenly fattening she made steady progress to the matronly *embonpoint*, for which she was remarkable, when Mrs. Trench made her acquaintance at Dresden in 1800. Had she adopted the regimen, by which Beauties

sometimes guard their charms from premature impairment, she might have greatly prolonged the brief term of her beauty's highest loveliness. But it probably never occurred to the unaccredited ambassadress to make trial of a regimen, in which she certainly could not have persisted. For, keen though it was, Lady Hamilton's appetite for admiration was less powerful than her delight in good cheer.

The Queen of Beauty was a woman of various pleasures; and of them all, the enjoyments she derived from luxurious eating and drinking were the enjoyments she would have found it most difficult to forego. Had she been told by her doctors, that she must choose between the delight of being faultlessly beautiful and the gratification of her palate, she would have decided to sacrifice something of her beauty, in order to indulge in pleasures that were unspeakably dear to her. Had they told her that, without severe temperance, she would lose the finest qualities of her voice as well as the finest delicacy of her personal charms, she might have hesitated a few minutes, but in the end would have answered, 'Anyhow, I shall still be handsome, and sing well enough to be applauded for it; but, come what may, I must have my pleasant breakfasts, dainty dinners, delightful suppers, and delicious champagne.'

Always devoid of affectation, this sincerest of professional Beauties, whose hearty, vivacious, racily indiscreet talkativeness was a chief element of her charming naturalness, never attempted to conceal how largely eating and drinking contributed to her contentment. At Dresden, not a little to the horror of

Mr. and Mrs. Elliot, who were superfine examples of diplomatic decorum, she frankly declared herself 'passionately fond of champagne,' and, not a little to the amusement of the people at Mrs. Elliot's dinner-table, demonstrated the truth of the avowal by drinking the beloved wine with a freedom, that caused Mrs. Trench the liveliest astonishment. Even greater surprise seized Mrs. Trench, when, on hearing that the entertainments at Court were tame and far from diverting affairs, as the Elector never gave dinners or suppers, Nelson's enchantress ejaculated, in a voice equally expressive of amazement and incredulity, 'What? no guttling?' Upon the whole, therefore, one is less disposed to wonder at the shortness, than at the length of the period, during which the self-indulgent Beauty was perfectly beautiful.

Whilst Lady Hamilton was rising higher and yet higher in Maria Caroline's regard, and was the darling of every coterie of the Neapolitan court-circle, she displayed a certain measure of concern—perhaps, *all* the concern she could safely display—for the welfare of her daughter in England. Up to the time of her marriage, Lady Hamilton seems to have kept Sir William in ignorance of this child's existence; and in later time, when he had taken upon himself the charges of the girl's maintenance and education, Lady Hamilton seems to have represented to him, that her interest in Emma was mere beneficence for an orphan child, who had for some time lived on her bounty. What story was told about the child to Sir William does not appear precisely; but enough of the story figures on the record to make it certain that the account of the

child's birth and history given to Sir William was not strictly veracious. Probably he had his own suspicions touching the young lady's maternity, but thought it politic to keep them to himself, whilst doing what was reasonably munificent towards his wife's rather mysterious *protégée*. Anyhow little Emma, during her mother's absence from England, had been as well cared for as Mr. Greville had promised she should be, and in 1792 and the two following years was living under the care of a certain Mr. and Mrs. Blackburn, at a charge of something like £70 a year to Sir William Hamilton.

In those years, several letters passed between London and Naples, respecting what was being, or in the near future should be done for this young lady, who had forgotten all about her mother. Unlike her mother, she was short, and, though fairly personable, had no promise of developing into a beauty. Mr. Greville was of opinion, that she should be educated for some calling in which she would be able to maintain herself, but, at the same time, in a way that would fit her for marriage to a poor clergyman or not exalted member of one of the other professions. Should a suitable and discreet young man take a fancy to Lady Hamilton's *protégée*, Mr. Greville was of opinion that Sir William Hamilton would do well to confirm the suitable young man's fancy by providing a moderate *dot* for the girl.

The present writer is not in a position to state positively what became of Emma the Younger; but he is more than slightly disposed to think she died in 1804. Writing from sea to Lady Hamilton on

2nd of April, 1804, Nelson put on paper these words,

‘ Captain Capel brought me your letters sent from the *Thisbe* from Gibraltar. I opened, opened—found none but one without a date—which, thank God, told my heart you was recovering; but that little Emma was no more! and that Horatia had been so very ill—it quite upset me. But it was just at bedtime, and I had time to reflect, and be thankful to God for sparing you and our dear Horatia. I am [? was] sure the loss of one—much more both—would have drove [you] mad. I was so agitated as it was, that I was glad it was night, and that I would be by myself.’

Perhaps the Emma whose death is thus referred to was Lady Hamilton’s first-born child. Emma the Younger’s diminutive stature would account for Nelson’s speaking of her as ‘ dear *little* Emma.’

Anyhow it may be assumed confidently that Emma the Younger died before Lady Hamilton made her will in 1811, as the testament, which refers to the testator’s cousins, makes no reference to any individual who can have been her first-born daughter.

Of all the several hurtful conditions of the life that may be fairly said to have been forced upon Lady Hamilton, the most injurious to the character of the young woman so fully qualified by nature to be a good mother, was the necessity of separating herself from her first-born child. Though they may be fairly pleaded as extenuating circumstances, the necessities of her position, of course, do not render her conduct in this respect, either defensible or excusable. In fairness to her, however, it should be remembered that, if she was distinctly wanting in perfect maternal dutifulness to her first-born daughter, she cannot be charged with heartless unconcern for the child’s sub-

stantial welfare. That she was still capable of proving herself a good mother appears from the affectionate care she took of her daughter Horatia, from the hour when Sir William Hamilton left her at liberty to obey her maternal instinct, till the hour of her own death.

The first fourteen months of Lady Hamilton's married life had yielded her almost unqualified happiness, when in the November of 1792, soon after taking part in court festivities of unusual splendour, she was rudely reminded by how slender a thread she held the grandeur and gladness of the position to which she had raised herself. Sir William Hamilton was stricken by an illness that for several days seemed likely to end in death. The Minister's illness was an occasion for Lady Hamilton to show how well she could discharge the most painful and irksome of the duties she owed to the husband who, on rising from his bed of sickness, had reason to attribute his recovery to her good nursing. It was also an occasion for her exalted friends to show the Minister's wife that she had their sympathy in her time of sorrow, no less than in her hours of triumph. Whilst Sir William was lying ill at Caserta, the King and Queen sent messages of affectionate enquiry every morning and evening to the nurse. The leading ladies of the Neapolitan English coteries were no less regular in their enquiries, whilst several of them wrote to Lady Hamilton, entreating her to let them come and aid her in the wifely services that were exhausting her powers. Of these civilities, Lady Hamilton made mention in the following letter to her husband's still favourite nephew:—

*Lady Hamilton (Emma) to the Hon. Charles Greville,
King's Mews, Charing Cross, London.*

‘Caserta: Decr 4th, 1792.

‘DEAR SIR,—I have the pleasure to inform you that Sir William is out of danger, and very well, considering the illness he [h]as had to battle with. He [h]as been 15 days in bed with a billious fever, and I have been almost as ill as him with anxiety, apprehension and fatige, the last, endead, the least of what I have felt, and I am now doubly repaid by the dayly progress he makes for the better. Luckily we were at Caserta w[h]ere his convalescence will have fair play, and I am in hopes he will be better then ever he was in his life; for his disorder as been long gathering and was a Liver Complaint. I need not say to you, my dear Mr. Greville, what I have suffered. Endead I was almost distracted from such extreme happiness at once to such misery, that I felt [what] your good heart may imagine. I was eight days without undressing, eating or sleeping. I have great obligations to the English ladies and Neapolitans. Altho’ we are 16 miles from Naples, Lady Plymouth, Lady . . . Lady Webster, and several others sent twice aday, and offered to come and stay with me, and the King and Queen sent constantly morning and evening the most flattering messages; but all was nothing to me. What could console me for the loss of such a husband, friend and protector? For surely no happiness is like ours. We live but for one another. But I was too happy. I had imagined I was never more to be unhappy. All is right. I now know myself again, and I shall not easily fall into the same error again. For every moment I feel what I felt, when I thought I was loseing him for ever. Pray excuse me: but you, who loved Sir William, may figure to your self my situation at that moment.

‘I will trouble you with my own affairs, as you are so good as to interest yourself about me. You must know, I send my grandmother every cristmas twenty pounds, and so I ought. I have 2 hundred a-year for nonsense, and it would be hard [if] I could not give her twenty pounds, when she has so often given me her last shilling. As Sir

William is ill I cannot ask him for the order; but if you will get the twenty pounds and send it to her, you will do me the greatest favour; for if the time passes without hearing from me, she may imagine I have forgot her, and I would not keep her poor old heart in suspense for the world, and as she [h]as heard of my circumstances (I don't know how), but she is prudent, and therefore pray lose no time, and Sir W^m shall send you the order. You know her direction—Mrs. Kidd, Howerden, Flintshire. Could you not write to her a line from me and send to her, and tell her by my order, and she may write to you and send me her answer? For I cannot divest myself of my original feelings. It will contribute to my happiness, and I am sure you will assist to make me happy. Tell her every year she shall have twenty pound. The fourth of November last, I had a dress on that cost twenty-five pounds, as it was Gala at Court; and believe me I felt unhappy all the while I had it on. Excuse the trouble I give you, and believe me

‘Your sincere—EMMA HAMILTON.’

Soon it was Lady Hamilton's turn to address words of condolence on a personal sorrow to the Queen who had displayed so much concern at the British Minister's danger and so much womanly sympathy with his wife. To her dear Lady Hamilton's expressions of anguish and dismay at ‘the execrable deed the infamous French have committed,’ Maria Caroline (*vide*, Pettigrew's ‘Memoirs of Lord Nelson,’ vol. ii, p. 602) replied on the 9th of February, 1793, in terms that were addressed to the British Minister and the nation he represented no less than to the Beauty, whom the writer had so signally befriended. ‘I send you,’ the Queen wrote, ‘the portrait of that innocent child who implores assistance, vengeance, or, if he is also sacrificed, his ashes united to those of his parents, cry to the Eternal for speedy retribu-

tion; I rely the most on your generous nation to accomplish it.' In these words of the Queen, who at the foot of the note styled herself Lady Hamilton's 'attached friend,' may be seen not only the service which Maria Caroline required of 'a generous nation,' but also the motive that had now for a considerable period animated her in her strong and continuous endeavours to make the British Minister a partizan of her cause.

At Caserta, when he fell ill in November, 1792, Sir William and Lady Hamilton remained there till the midsummer of 1793, receiving under their roof the aristocratic English visitors—such as the Duchess of Ancaster, Lord and Lady Cholmondeley, the Devonshire family, Lord and Lady Palmerston, Lady Spencer, Lady Bessborough, Lady Plymouth, and Sir George and Lady Webster—who came to them in steady stream. In the winter, Lady Hamilton's country-house resembled an inn rather than a private residence, in respect to the number of persons who came to it and went from it. There were days together when she had a family of fifty persons on her hands; and as it devolved on her to take English ladies of her acquaintance to the Caserta Palace (where the Court at this time resided more than at Naples), to be introduced to Maria Caroline, the British Minister's wife was in constant stir and excitement. The exertions demanded of her, as a lady in almost daily attendance on the Queen, and as the entertainer of many guests, were the more exhausting, because she was required to give receptions and balls at Naples, whilst keeping open house at Caserta. In this respect

the British Minister and his wife followed the example of Ferdinand and Maria Caroline, who, whilst staying at Caserta, were continually driving into Naples to preside at the entertainments of the Palazzo Reale. It not seldom happened that, after entertaining fifty guests at a dinner and three hundred dancers at a ball in her town-house, Lady Hamilton started so late for the drive back to Caserta that she was not in bed before four o'clock in the morning.

Alike at Naples and Caserta, Lady Hamilton was a chief actor in the gay doings of the great world, and in this season of her growing favour with the Queen and Court, whatever she said or did won universal approval. Whilst her songs, attitudes, acting were applauded more and more rapturously, she was proclaimed (not without reason) the best dancer of all the ladies who surrounded Maria Theresa's daughter. It speaks much for her genuine good and sterling amiability, that, instead of being rendered insolent by the idolatry offered to her at every turn, this fairest of fortune's favourites was no less studious to please others, now that she was every one's Queen of Beauty, than she had been when she was a mere candidate for social eminence. She was precisely the same blithe, outspoken, frank-mannered, charmingly natural young woman, that she was before her elevation. Indeed, in her determination to be altogether what she had been, and to avoid the imputation of 'giving herself airs,' there was reason to fear that her old 'charming naturalness' would lose something of its pristine sincerity and become a kind of affectation. Keeping to herself the compliments lavished on her

by the Queen in private, she overflowed with simple complaisance to the less favoured ladies of the diplomatic circle, and at the general court-receptions was careful to keep herself as far as possible in the background, and to bear herself as though she were of no more account in the Queen's eyes, than any other Minister's wife. 'However,' she wrote on the 2nd of June, 1793, to her nephew, Mr. Charles Greville, 'the Ministers' wives are very fond of me, as they see I have no pretensions; nor do I abuse of her Majesty's goodness, and she observed that the other night at Court at Naples, when they had a drawing-room in honour of the Empress.'

What other things Lady Hamilton said at the same time to her nephew, readers may learn from this letter,—

Lady Hamilton to the Honourable Charles Greville.

‘Caserta : June 2nd, 1793.

‘I should have answered your kind letter sooner; but I have not had time to write to any of my friends these five months, which I am sorry for, as they may accuse me of neglect and ingratitude, which, if they do it, will be a wrong accusation; for I literally have been so busy with the English, the Court and my home duties, as to prevent me doing things I had much at heart to do.

‘For political reasons we have lived eight months at Caserta, that is—making this our constant residence, and going twice a-week to town to give dinners, balls, &c. &c. &c., returning here at 2 or 3 a clock in the morning after the fatigue of a dinner of fifty, and a ball and supper of 3 hundred. Then to dress early in the morning, to go to court, to dinner at twelve a clock, as the Royal family dine early, and they [have] done Sir William and me the honner to invite us very, very often. Our house at Caserta [h]as been like an inn this winter, as we have had partys, that have

come either to see the environs, or have been invited to court. We had the Duchess of Ancaster several days. It is but 3 days since the Devonshire family has left; and we had fifty in [our] family for four days at Caserta. 'Tis true, we dined every day at court, or at some casino of the King; for you cannot imagine how good our King and Queen [h]as been to the principal English, who have been here—particularly to Lord and Lady Palmerston, Cholmondeley, Devonshire, Lady Spencer, Lady Besborough, Lady Plymouth, Sir George and Lady Webster. And I have carried the Ladies to the Queen very often, as she [h]as permitted me to go to her very often in private, which I do. And the reason why we stay now here is, I have promised the Queen to remain as long as she does, which will be till the tenth of July. In the evenings I go to her, and we are *tête-à-tête* 2 or 3 hours. Sometimes we sing. Yesterday the King and me sang duetts 3 hours. It was but bad, *as he sings like a King*. To-day the Princess Royal of Sweden comes to court, to take leave of their Majestys. Sir William and me are invited to dinner with her. She is an amiable princess and [h]as lived very much with us. We have given her several dinners, balls, &c.; for she loves dancing dearly. The other Ministers' wives have not shewd her the least attention, because she did not pay them the first visit, as she travels under the name of the Countess of Wasa. In consequence the Queen [h]as not asked them to dinner to-day, and Her Majesty told me I had done very well in waiting on Her Royal Highness, the moment she arrived. However the Ministers' wives are very fond of me, as the[y] see I have no pretensions; nor do I abuse of Her Majesty's goodness, and she observed that the other night at Court at Naples, [when] we had a Drawing-room in honnor of the Empress having brought a son (*sic*). I had been with the Queen the night before alone *en famille*, laughing and singing, &c. &c., but at the drawing-room I kept my distance, and payd the Queen as much respect as tho' I had never seen her before, which pleased her very much. But she shewd me great distinction that night, and told me several times how she admired my good conduct. I onely tell you this to shew and convince you, I shall never change, but always be simple and natural.

‘ You may imagine how happy my dear, dear Sir William is ; and I can assure you, if ever I had any little teasing caprice, it is so entirely gone, that neither [? not even] Sir William remembers it, and he will tell you the same. Ended, you cannot imagine our happiness. It is not to be described. We are not an hour in the day seperable. We live more like lovers than husband and wife, as husbands and wives go now-a-days. Lord deliver me ! and the English are as bad as the Italians, some few excepted.

‘ I study very hard, and I have made great progress in French and musick, and I have had all my songs set out for the viola, [so] that Sir William may accompany me, which [h]as pleased him very much, so that we study together. The English garden is going on very fast. The King and Queen go there every day. Sir William and me are there every morning at seven a clock, sometimes dine there, and allways drink tea there. In short, it is Sir William’s favourite child, and booth him and me are now studying botany, but not to make ourselves pedantical prigs, and to shew our learning like some of our traveling neighbours, but for our own pleasure.

‘ Greffer is as happy as a prince. Poor Flint, the messenger will [? was] killed going from hence. I am very sorry. He was lodged in our house, and I had a great love for him. I sent him to see Pompea (*sic*) Portici (*sic*) and all our delightfull environs, and sent all his daughters presents. Poor man, the Queen [h]as expressed great sorrow. Pray, let me know if his familly are provided for, as I may get something for them perhaps. Addio. Love me and believe,

‘ Your sincere friend,

‘ E. HAMILTON.’

This year of fast-coming and violent delights was also memorable to Lady Hamilton in later time, as the year in which she made Nelson’s acquaintance, under circumstances that, without giving birth to the passion that has indissolubly associated their names and fortunes, caused her to regard him with more than ordinary interest, and to form a high

opinion of his mental capacity. Born on the 29th of September, 1758, Captain Horatio Nelson of *H.M.S. Agamemnon* (64 guns) was still in his 35th year, when at the opening of September 1793, immediately after the surrender of Toulon to the British, he was sent by Lord Hood to Oneglia with dispatches for the British Minister at Turin, and thence to Naples with dispatches for Sir William Hamilton, with whom he was instructed to have personal conference. Still thirty-four years of age, still looking forth boldly from *both* eyes, still possessing the right arm which he lost a few years later at Santa Cruz, he had always made himself a man of mark to members of his profession, but was still unknown to fame and only nearing the threshold of greatness, when he landed at Naples and appeared for the first time before Sir William Hamilton.

Any captain of the British fleet, coming to Naples at that moment in the way of service, would have been received with cordial welcome by the British Minister, who was elated by the surrender of Toulon to his sovereign, and knew that by showing unusual honour to the envoy from the Admiral, who had made himself master of the French port and stronghold, he would exhibit himself to Maria Caroline as an upholder of her cause, and a sustainer of her Anti-French policy. But it can be readily believed that the British Minister, a shrewd judge of men, was sincere in declaring that in his brief interview with the sailor, he discovered the signs of rare capacity and the promise of signal greatness in the *Agamemnon's* captain. For, though he was of mean stature and un-

imposing presence, Captain Nelson had the bearing of a man, who, without immodesty, believed in himself, and knew that the time was at hand when the belief would be shared by others. Though his hair was lank, and his long visage would not have misbeseemed a clever mechanic, he had a noble forehead, strange and penetrating eyes, lips singularly expressive of resoluteness, and a voice that, when he was stirred by emotion, declared him to have been made by nature for a chieftain and leader of men.

Favourably impressed by his visitor's bearing and tone, Sir William Hamilton thought none the less well of him, when towards the close of their first conference the captain of the *Agamemnon* observed with flattering, though rude and unpolished, cordiality, 'You are a man after my own heart ; you do business in my own way ; I am now only captain, but if I live, I will be at the top of the tree.'

It was not Sir William's wont to invite naval officers to his house for *bed* as well as board, but mingled motives of liking and policy determined the never inhospitable Minister to be more than ordinarily hospitable to this particular sailor. Having pressed him to become his guest during his stay at Naples, Sir William determined to entertain him as though he were a prince. Returning to Lady Hamilton, the Minister said, 'The captain I am about to introduce to you is a little man, and far from handsome, but he will live to be a great man. I know it from the talk I have had with him. Let him be put in the room prepared for Prince Augustus.' The guest, for whose advantage Sir William gave this order, was, of course

received by Lady Hamilton in a way that made him think as highly of her complaisance as of her beauty.

Sleeping under the British Minister's roof, the captain of the *Agamemnon* became at once the personage of the hour in every coterie of the *beau-monde*, that was well-affected to the government. The Prime Minister (Sir John Acton, to whom reference has already been made) and all the chief dignitaries of state, hastened to him with hospitable offers. Feasted by nobles, he was *fêted* at Court, where the Queen, opening her heart to him, declared that were it not for the British navy she should be hopeless for Europe. Having already dashed the insolence of the wicked and execrable French, the sailors of England would avenge the murder of Louis. By enabling the armies of Europe to act effectually they would, even at this late hour, restore Marie Antoinette to liberty, and place her son on the throne of his ancestors. Already the saviours of Italy, soon the sailors of England would be the preservers of Europe. Everything was possible to the English navy. Had Captain Nelson been the Lord High Admiral of that navy, or even the wearer of his sovereign's crown, Maria Caroline could scarcely have shown him greater respect during their frequent interviews, in which Lady Hamilton played the part of interpreter between the Queen, who knew little English, and the seaman who had little French and no Italian.

Whilst Maria Caroline flattered him profusely, Ferdinand treated the captain of the *Agamemnon* with unusual favour. Giving him three audiences in four successive days, the King of the Two Sicilies hon-

oured him with a grand dinner, at which he sat, at the host's right hand. 'I was,' Nelson wrote to his brother William on 24th September, 1793, 'three times with him out of four days, and once to dinner, when I was placed at his right hand before our ambassador and all the Nobles present.'

To find himself thus honoured at court, and worshipped by the nobles of the loveliest capital he had ever visited, may well have gratified Nelson, who in the course of professional duty had not hitherto seen much of social grandeur, though five years since his wedding in the West Indies had been attended by the Duke of Clarence. Hitherto the still unrecognized hero's career had been fruitful of disappointments that gave him grounds for thinking he was regarded with disfavour at the Admiralty. For the greater part of five years he had chafed and fretted in a Norfolk village, living on half-pay, taking his usual daily exercise in the kitchen-garden, where he worked with the spade like any labourer, pining for the employment that was not offered him, yearning to be away from his wife and at sea for her sake as well as for his own, again and again hoping to get a particular ship that a few weeks later was given to a more fortunate suitor for service. Even when his turn for employment came after so many disappointments, it seemed to him for some weeks that he had been sent to sea in his good ship of 64 guns, for no better purpose than to float about, 'from ten to twenty leagues to the westward of Guernsey,' where 'no enemy was likely to be met with.' But now Fortune and the Future had assumed brighter looks. At length he was in seas

where he would have a glut of danger and fighting, and at a port where he was treated like a prince.

Nor was Nelson the only sailor of the *Agamemnon* to feel he had come to a clime and period where 'the service' was duly honoured. Even to the youngest and smallest midshipmite, the officers of Nelson's ship partook of the welcome and distinctions accorded to her captain. At San Carlos and the other theatres, at the concerts and balls of great houses, the uniform of King George's navy was conspicuous; and, though they were sometimes regarded in the public way with angry disfavour by the partisans of the French faction, the wearers of the distinctive dress tasted idolatry in the salons, where the favourers of the French party forbore to reveal their genuine sentiments by looks, that would have been promptly reported to the Queen. No wonder the English officers were treated thus handsomely by 'society!' For the *mot* had passed from Maria Caroline's lips that they were the saviours of Italy, and should be duly honoured by her loyal Neapolitans for saving Italy from the accursed French.

Of all the *Agamemnon's* midshipmen ashore none was in better luck than Josiah Nisbet (Mrs. Nelson's son by her former husband, the Nevis doctor), who joined his stepfather at the British Minister's house, and for the first time in his life felt the pleasure of being petted by an extremely beautiful and charming woman. 'Lady Hamilton,' Nelson wrote home to his wife, 'has been wonderfully kind and good to Josiah. She is a young woman of amiable manners, who does honour to the station to which she is raised'—a judg-

ment in which Josiah had every reason to concur; for the famous Beauty took him hither and thither with her in her carriage, introducing him to all kinds of exalted people, rallying him gaily on being her *cavalière servente*, and seeming unable to make enough of the whiskerless Saviour of Italy. The boy enjoyed his time at Naples vastly, little thinking what words of disdainful aversion for the 'young woman of amiable manners' he would utter in his rage and cups some five years later.

The main purpose of Nelson's mission to Naples being to induce Ferdinand to send troops to Toulon, to assist in preserving it to its recent captors, it is needless to say that the British envoy returned to his Admiral with a good report of the King's readiness to do everything that was required of him. In other respects Nelson's stay at Naples was fruitful of good, and in no single respect attended with misadventure. The notion that he thus early, and during so brief an association, conceived the regrettable passion for Lady Hamilton does not require serious consideration. So preposterous a fancy could only have originated with writers totally incapable of estimating the steadiness of his affections and the simple goodness of his heart. In the September of 1793, Nelson—no mere seafaring libertine, quick to find a new mistress in every port he touched, but a true, guileless, and gallant gentleman if the English navy ever produced one—had not been long enough away from his Fanny, to be capable of even the most transient amatory tenderness for another woman, however lovely and fascinating. What was unfortunate and regrettable

in 1799 would have been shameful in 1793. And Nelson's nature had no single weak point to which shame could fasten itself. Moreover, had he been of a less sober disposition, the captain of the *Agamemnon* during his brief sojourn at Naples, was too fully occupied with affairs to slide so quickly into a *liaison* with his hostess. The interests and projects, that held his attention at the opening of his first Mediterranean period, would of themselves have preserved him from the imbecility and sentimental fickleness of which he is accused by the writers, who maintain that he regarded Lady Hamilton with affection during his first stay at Naples. It is certain that, in 1793, he no more loved, thought of loving, or was capable of loving Lady Hamilton, than he was capable of advising his stepson Josiah to run away with her.

Nelson's stay at Naples in 1793 closed with the grand breakfast on board his ship, to which he invited Sir William and Lady Hamilton, the Honourable Brownlow North (Bishop of Winchester and second son of the first Earl of Guilford), Mrs. North with other members of the prelate's family, the Earl and Countess of Plymouth, Earl Grandison and Lady Gertrude Amelia Villiers, and other English people of rank and quality. It had been arranged that the company invited to breakfast should leave the ship at one o'clock, when King Ferdinand was expected on board to bid the captain farewell. But the party dispersed before the appointed hour, and the arrangements for Ferdinand's reception were set aside at the last moment, in consequence 'of an express that a French Man-of-war and three Sail under her convoy had

anchored under Sardinia,'—intelligence that in a trice cleared the *Agamemnon* of fashionable idlers and recalled her captain from pleasure to duty. 'As the Prime Minister sent me the information,' he wrote to his clerical brother, 'unfit as my ship was, I had nothing left for the honour of our country but to sail, which I did in two hours afterwards.'

To pass to a subject less interesting, but no less needful to be considered by those who would have a complete view of Lady Hamilton's Italian life. Having narrowly escaped death from bilious fever towards the close of 1792, Sir William was visited with a sharp, though less perilous, assault of the same malady in the December of 1793. To this illness reference is made by Lady Hamilton in the following brief note :

Lady Hamilton to the Hon. Charles Greville.

'December [1793].

'DEAR GREVILLE,

'Sir William desires me to beg of you to ask the Colonel' [*viz.*, Colonel Greville, Mr. Charles Greville's brother] 'to speak to the King, if he is in waiting, to say that he is [in] bed with a billious fever (but in no danger), and that is the reason he does not write more by this courier; but when he gets well, he will make up for it. As things are at this critical moment, he does not trust his Secretary, and altho' against the advice of doctors he [h]as written, yet he hopes next week to be able to do what he wishes. Good-by. I can only say, I am truly

'Your sincere

'EMMA HAMILTON.

'P.S.—Pray send me by this Courier 2 or 3 pieces of the finest sprigd muslin for gownds, and twelve fine muslin handkerchiefs, and 2 pieces of plain clear muslin. Don't fail for I want them. Put them down to Sir William's account with Ross and Ogilvy.'

Henceforth Sir William Hamilton suffered from

frequent illnesses,—fevers attended with violent biliary disorder and exhausting diarrhea. The significance of these illnesses should not be overlooked by the reader. By this time on the threshold of his 65th year, Sir William was now paying the penalty for the excesses of labour and self-indulgence, by which he had broken up the fine constitution, that might have endured till its 90th year, had the man of many pursuits and pleasures taken ordinary care of his health. But from the day when he joined the Guards he had been a hard liver,—eating freely, drinking freely, overtaxing his physical powers with excessive bodily exercise, and throughout forty years of social gaiety and distractions working resolutely in his study and his cabinet. With shattered health and waning energies, he now ventured on the most trying and anxious term of his official career. Under these circumstances, it is not surprising that, whilst retaining much of his spiritual alertness and muscular vigour, he failed steadily in all other respects. On coming to Naples from the Nile in 1798, Nelson found Sir William Hamilton an old man, who relying on his wife's judgment in all matters of business could not have maintained the appearance of official sufficiency without her assistance. The great Admiral was guilty of no exaggeration in declaring after Sir William's death, that the British Minister could not have discharged the functions of his office in 1798 and 1799, had it not been for his wife's command of the Italian tongue, her energy, and her knowledge of persons and affairs. When Nelson found the Minister thus aged and shattered, Lady Hamilton was still only in her 36th year.

CHAPTER XVII.

SECRET INTELLIGENCE.

Sir William Hamilton's Illness in 1794—The Hamiltons at Castellamare—Third Anniversary of their Wedding—Mr. Charles Greville is made Vice-Chamberlain—Lady Hamilton's Affection for her Mother—Her Enthusiasm for Maria Caroline—The Queen's Goodness to her Favourite—Lady Hamilton's Concern for 'little Emma'—Sir William Hamilton's Illness in 1795—Lady Hamilton 'gets into Politics'—The Letter in Cypher from Spain—Maria Caroline's Promptitude in sending it to the British Minister—Her Motives for doing so—Considerations touching this significant Business—Sir James Douglas's Death—Mr. Macaulay seeks the vacant Consulship—Sir William Hamilton's Absence from Court—Maria Caroline's secret Correspondence with the British Minister—The Veil that hides it.

1794—1795 A.D.

LIKE many other inhabitants of Naples, Sir William Hamilton suffered severely from diarrhetic illness in the summer of 1794, the prostration caused by the malady being in his case so extreme, as to alarm Lady Hamilton, who had herself been touched by the epidemic. On rallying from the sickness, the British Minister and his wife went for change of air to Castellamare, where they were soon well enough to enjoy the society of friends from Naples, and kept with fit festivity the third anniversary of their wedding, at the palace which Maria Caroline had placed

at the service of her especially dear diplomatic friends. It was from this palace that Lady Hamilton dated the letter, which conveyed her congratulations to her nephew, Mr. Charles Greville, on his appointment to the place of Vice-Chamberlain,—an office that placed its holder in easy circumstances, till he became, some nine years later, a wealthy man,—

Lady Hamilton to the Honourable Charles Greville.

‘Castellamare : Sep^{bre}. 16, 1794.

‘I congratulate you, my dear Mr. Greville, with all my heart on your appointment to the Vice-Chamberlainship. You have well merited it, and all your friends must be happy at a change, so favourable not only for your pecuniary circumstances, as for the honner of the situation. May you long enjoy it with every happiness that you deserve! I speak from my heart. I don’t know a better, honester or more amiable and worthy man than yourself; and it is a great deal for me to say this, for whatever I think I am not apt to pay compliments.

‘My dear Sir William [h]as had the disorder that we and all Naples have had since the eruption,—a violent *diarea* that reduced him to so very low an ebb, that I was very much alarmed for him, notwithstanding I thought I should have gone with him. But, thank God! we are here as happy as possible in the Queen’s Palace, enjoying every comfort and happiness that good health, royall favour and domestick happiness can give us. The other day, the anniversary of our marriage, Sir William told me he loved me better than ever, and had never for one moment repented. Think of my feelings in that moment, when I could with truth say the same to him. I gave here that day a little *fête*, when Lord and Lady Plymouth, &c. &c., came down here, and I never saw Sir William so happy, nor never was so happy myself. I tell you this, because I know you will rejoice at it.

‘I will write soon and send you to setle with Mrs. Hackwood; but all the things were spoilt, and I had no right to

pay for them. But I will settle it ; and pray, go and tell her so. For the other affair, I will write to you fully ; and as this is a letter of congratulation, nothing shall disturb our happy ideas. I wish you could send me an English riding hat, very fashionable. But I desire you to put it to Sir William's account. We have company to-day from Naples, and I cannot write more than that I am, dear Mr. Greville's

‘ Ever sincere and affectionate friend,

‘ EMMA HAMILTON.

‘ P.S.—Mother's love to you. She is the comfort of our lives, and is our housekeeper. Sir William doats on her. Give my love to the Col.’

The reader should not overlook the postscript of this letter, which affords an indication of the writer's filial affectionateness to the mother, who certainly merited her daughter's love, and in other respects seems to have been a worthy woman. The Colonel, to whom Lady Hamilton sent her love in the tail of the postscript, was Mr. Charles Greville's younger brother, Colonel Robert Fulke Greville, the court-equerry, who, whilst keeping on fairly good terms with his aunt, was naturally less attentive to her, than her other nephew.

Before the close of the year, Lady Hamilton had the materials for a longer and more entertaining letter (dated from Caserta) to her favourite nephew, whom she instructed to pay her London dressmaker's bill. By this time the writer had discovered how difficult it was to dress on a good deal less than £200 a-year up to the dignity of first favourite at Maria Caroline's court, where she was now an almost daily attendant on Her Majesty, and often appeared twice in the day. The Prince Augustus would soon be at

Caserta, and afterwards would be the writer's guest at Naples. Of the ever-dear and gracious Queen Maria Caroline, Mr. Greville's correspondent spoke in the highest terms. There never was so virtuous and charming a Queen. She was the best mother, wife, friend in the whole world. Yet this exemplary princess had not escaped calumny. A vile French dog had written a cursed book, containing a character of her, that was made up of lies, which Mr. Greville would, as he honoured good women, declare to be untrue. The Queen had herself put this book into the hands of her intimate friend, who in the cause of truth and from her devotion to the slandered Princess spoke thus warmly of the volume's cursedness. More could not have been written to the libel's discredit by any woman. And to say less would have ill-beseemed the lady, who was daily to be seen riding about Caserta on horses provided for her by the virtuous Queen, with a court-equerri, and a servant wearing Her Majesty's livery in attendance upon her.

Lady Hamilton to the Hon. Charles Greville.

‘Caserta: Dec^{ber}. 18th, 1794.

‘I have onely time to write you a few lines by the Neapolitan Courier, who will give you this. He comes back soon, and pray send me by him some ribbands and fourteen yards of fine muslin worked for a gound or fine sero (?). Ask my Lady what sero (?) is, and she will tell you, and pray pay Hackwood's [bill], and put [it] down to Sir William's account with his banker. He told me I might; for I have so many occasions to spend my money, that my 2 hundred pounds will scarcely do for me, [with] a constant attendance at Court now, once and generally twice aday, and I must be well dress'd. You know how far 2 hundred will go. To-day we expect the Prince Augustus from Rome. He is

to be lodged at the Pallace here, and with us in town. To-morrow we have a great dinner at Court for the Prince. The Queen invited me last night herself, and we passed four hours in an No person can be so charming as the Queen. She is everything one can wish,—the best mother, wife and freind in the world. I live constantly with her, and have done intimately so for 2 years, and I never have in all that time seen anything but goodness and sincerity in her, and, if ever you hear any lyes about her, contradict them, and if you should see a cursed book written by a vile french dog with her character in it, don't believe one word. She lent it me last night, and I have by reading the infamous calumny put myself quite out of humour, that so good and virtus a princess should be so infamously described.

‘Lord Bristol is with us at Caserta. He passes one week at Naples, and one with us. He is very fond of me, and very kind. He is very entertaining, and dashes at everything. Nor does he mind King or Queen, when he is inclined to show his talents. I am now taking lessons from Willico, and make great progress. Nor do I slacken in any of my studys. We have been here 3 months, and remain four or five months longer. We go to Naples every now and then. I ride on horseback. The Queen has had the goodness to supply me with horses, an equerry, and her own servant in her livery every day. In short, if I was her daughter, she could not be kinder to me, and I love her with my whole soul.

‘My dear Sir William is very well, and as fond of me as ever; and I am, as women generally are, ten thousand times fonder of him than I was, and you would be delighted to see how happy we are,—no quarelling, nor crossness, nor laziness. All nonsense is at an end, and everybody that sees us are edified by our example of conjugal and domestick felicity. Will you ever come and see us? You shall be received with kindness by us booth, for we have booth obligations to you, for having made us acquainted with each other. Excuse the haist with which I write, for we are going to Capua to meet the Prince Augustus. Do send me a plan, how I could situate little Emma, poor thing; for I wish it.

‘E. HAMILTON.’

It redounds less to the honour of this lady of a luxurious court, who had whilom carried Mrs. Budd's baby over the London pavement, that she was mounted from the royal stables, and took her daily rides about the parks of Caserta with a royal equerry at her heels and one of the Queen's grooms for her outrider, than it speaks for her womanly worth that, at the close of this record of her intimacy with Maria Caroline, she thought tenderly of her daughter, and entreated Mr. Greville to give her counsel for the child's advantage. The tenor of Mr. Greville's advice may be gathered from what was said in the last chapter of his scheme for the younger Emma's future.

In the spring of 1795, Sir William Hamilton had yet another attack of bilious fever, which, though less alarming than his illness towards the end of 1792, was sufficiently serious to cause Lady Hamilton much uneasiness, notwithstanding the doctor's confident opinion that his patient was in no danger. During the graver sickness of 1792, it was enough for Maria Caroline to send a message twice a-day to the Minister's villa for the latest news of his state; but in April, 1795, in her fear of losing the Ambassador who suited her purpose so well, and in her desire to make him feel how dear he was to her, the Queen sent four, and even five, times a-day to Lady Hamilton for intelligence of her beloved chevalier's condition. In her zeal to make him more completely her servant and partisan, Maria Caroline even declared her desire to assist in nursing him. Well might Lady Hamilton write to Mr. Greville of so signal a manifestation of *her* Queen's goodness: 'This is friendship!'

To qualify herself to be more serviceable to the Queen, who was so good a friend to her, Lady Hamilton begged Mr. Greville to send her news, 'political and private,' a request that doubtless caused Mr. Greville to smile, as he read why his aunt wanted news about politics rather than the latest fashions of London dress. 'For,' explained the whilom Emma of Edgware Row, 'against my will, *owing to my situation here*, I am got into politicks, and I wish to have news for our dear much-loved Queen.' Whilst thus requiring news fit for the Queen's ear, this diplomatist against her will impressed on her nephew Charles (for the information, of course, of his brother Robert, who had access to the King of Great Britain) how great was Maria Caroline's affection for England and England's ministry, and how strongly she desired a vigorous prosecution of the war, that was needful for the proper humiliation and chastisement of the wicked French. 'She loves England,' the aunt wrote, 'and is attached to our Ministry, and wishes the continuation of the war, as the only means to ruin that abominable French Council.' As for the recall of the Italian Minister, who had made himself so acceptable at the Court of St. James's, that the King of England was not a little displeased at the diplomatist's withdrawal, which His Majesty was disposed to attribute to Sir William Hamilton's mismanagement of affairs at Naples, Lady Hamilton intimated that neither Sir William nor the beloved Maria Caroline was at fault in the matter, and that the Prince of Castelcicala would soon return to England.

Lady Hamilton to the Honourable Charles Greville.

‘ Caserta : April 19th, 1795.

‘I write in a hurry, as I have a vast deal to do, and the Queen [h]as just sent to me, that a courier is to go of for England this afternoon. Poor Sir William [h]as been in bed 8 days with a billious fever, and was better, but wou’d get up yesterday, which [h]as thrown him back, and to-day he is not so well. But the docter, who is in the house with me, says there is no danger. I am very uneasy and not well myself, as I have been in bed, since he was taken ill. He was allways subject to billious attacks. After this illness, I hope he will be better then he [h]as been for some time, for the quantity of bile he [h]as discharged these days past is incredible, and he is naturally of a strong healthy constitution. We are going to get good saddle horses, as we live much in the country. Riding will do him good and is very good for billious complaints.

‘You never answerd my letter by the last courier, nor sent me what I wanted. So I will not trouble you with any more comissions, but try to find out somebody else *who will be more attentive to me.*

‘My ever dear Queen [h]as been like a mother to me, since Sir William [h]as been ill. She writes to me four and five times aday and offerd to come and assist me. This is friendship.

‘I have seen letters that the King of England is not pleased with this Court and Sir William, because they did not leave Castilcicala with them. Sir William did all he cou’d, and he does not care whether they are pleased or not, as they must be very ungratefull to a minister like him, that [h]as done so much to keep up good harmony between the 2 courts, and [h]as done more business in one day than another wou’d have done in ten, owing to the friendly footing he is on here with their Majestys and ministers. So, if they are out of humor, they may be. But between you and me, I have spoke a great deal to the Queen about the consequence it is to them to have a person of Castilcicala’s abilitys and very beloved in England there. And I believe he will return, from a letter I had from the Queen this morning ; and yesterday she said they wou’d do their utmost. But I can assure you

Sir William did all he cou'd to have him kept in England. So don't let them blame the best and most worthy man living. For they have no minister like him.

'I have had Lady Bath with me here 2 days. I carried her to the Queen. She is very shy, but she took a great fancy to me as I put her at her ease and did the honners of a ball for her, that she gave at Naples. She envited all the Neapolitan ladies of the first distinction, and I was to present them, and she took a *nervous* fit and wou'd not come out of her room for 3 hours. At last I got her out, and brought her into the room between me and Lady Berwick; and I carried the ladies, who were dancing, one by one to her in a corner, and she took such a liking [to me], that we are very great friends. Sir James seems a worthy good man. But Sir William says he wou'd not have her with all her money. However, I like her, for I think she [h]as a great deal of good about her. You was to have married her, I think I heard. However the Queen was very civil to her, as she is to every lady I carry to her. I have had a very bad billious fever this winter, [and was] near dying. It was owing to fatige, when Prince Augustus was with us, dancing, supping, &c. &c.

'Send me some news, political and private; for, against my will, *owing to my situation here*, I am got into politicks, and I wish to have news for our dear much-loved Queen, whom I adore. Nor can I live without her, for she is to me another [*? mother*] friend and everything. If you cou'd know her as I do, how you wou'd adore her! For she is the first woman in the world; her talents are superior to every woman's in the world; and her heart is most excellent and strictly good and upright. But you'l say it is because we are such friends, that I am partial; but ask everybody that knows her. She loves England and is attached to our Ministry, and wishes the continuation of the war as the only means to ruin that abominable French council.

'Addio. Love to Macpherson. Tell him I will write next post. I have received his. Poor Macaully is in a sad way by the victory of that vile Mackinnon.

'Ever yours, &c.,

'EMMA HAMILTON.'

Ten days later (29th of April, 1795), Lady Hamil-

ton received from the Queen of Naples the following letter (published in Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' vol. ii, pp. 610, 611), which exhibits so clearly the way in which Maria Caroline was feeding the British Government with secret intelligence, and using Lady Hamilton as the channel of her communications to the British Minister, that readers should scrutinize every line of the curious writing:—

‘ April 29th, 1795.

‘ MY VERY DEAR LADY,

‘ My head is so confused, and my spirits so agitated, that I know not what to do. I hope to see you to-morrow morning about ten o'clock. I send you a letter in cypher, come from Spain, from Galatone, which must be returned before twelve o'clock, so that the King may have it. There [are] some facts very interesting to the English Government, which I wish to communicate to them, to shew my attachment to them, and the confidence I feel in the worthy Chevalier. I only beg of him not to compromise me. Villars has shown at Genoa publicly, and privately to Ignasia Serra, Capano's brother, full powers to make peace with all the States of Italy, and afterwards they wish it particularly with the Sicilies; that shews their need of it. Adieu. We shall [speak] of many things to-morrow. Adieu. Believe me your sincere friend.’

What was the purport of this epistle from Spain does not appear; but to the Queen, who knew how to estimate the importance of intelligence, the information from Spain seemed of high moment. The writing, sent through Lady Hamilton to the British Minister, was no copy, but the original document; for there would have been no need that a mere copy should have been returned before twelve for the king's perusal. The epistle in cypher was sent to the British Minister by a person who was confident of his

ability to decipher it easily—a fact which, at least, justifies a presumption that Sir William Hamilton had been furnished by Her Majesty with the key to the cypher. Of her motives for sending the secret letter so promptly to Sir William Hamilton the Queen says, that she had sent it because the facts would interest the British Government, and because she wished to show at the same time her attachment to the government and her confidence in the British Minister at Naples. Her silence on the point is no evidence that she was not also actuated by a strong feeling, that her own particular policy in foreign affairs would be furthered by the transmission, and injured by a withholding of the news. That she was fully alive to the nature of her action in thus communicating state secrets, appears from her prayer that the British Minister would use the information so as to avoid compromising the giver of it: ‘*I only beg of him not to compromise me.*’ Sent to a foreign power, without the cognizance of her husband’s Council of State, the secret letter seems to have been sent without either his permission or knowledge. That the letter was addressed to him; that she opened the secret letter in his absence, in accordance with her usual way of dealing with his letters; and that he knew nothing about the contents of the epistle till it had been returned to the Queen, are fair, though not absolutely certain and unavoidable, inferences from the wording of Her Majesty’s letter to Lady Hamilton.

Anyhow, it is obvious that though she was the channel of communication from the Queen to the Minister, Lady Hamilton did not *get* the letter from

Maria Caroline by any exercise of her alleged marvellous power of wheedling or forcing the imperious Queen-Consort into doing whatever British interests required. In respect to *this* matter, there was no need or opportunity for Maria Caroline's favourite to exercise her aptitude for entreating, imploring, or exhorting with dramatic and irresistible effectiveness. The whole business was the Queen's own act. She sent the letter to Sir William Hamilton before Lady Hamilton had an opportunity of speaking to her about it, or even knew that it had come to Naples. It was sent by a messenger in the ordinary way to Sir William Hamilton under cover of a letter to the Court Beauty, with whom the Queen maintained a daily correspondence on matters of no moment, in order that she could, with greater security from the suspicious vigilance of treacherous courtiers, write to her from time to time on matters of high moment.

In the middle of the following month, Lady Hamilton wrote the following letter to Mr. Charles Greville:

Lady Hamilton to the Hon. Charles Greville.

‘ Casino Merala, Sotto S. Elmo :
Saturday, 16th of May, 1795.

‘ I have only time to say 2 words, as the Courier is going of. Sir James Douglas died yesterday, and Macaulay thinks there is a possibility of his getting the consulship with interest, which wou'd set his affairs a little to right. If it is possible, do help him by speaking to somebody in power. Do you know Lord Grenville? 2 words to him wou'd do; and they cannot make an excuse that [it] is given away, as they don't know of poor Sir James's death. So pray, do your utmost, for I wish of all things, that poor Macaulay may get [it]. And do, for God's sake, pay Mrs. Hackwood my debt. I wrote to you in Jan^y last, to beg of you to do

so. But I am affraid my letters never got to you. Get the money from Ross and Ogilvy, and let it be done emediatly, tho' she does not deserve it, as the things were all spoilt, and I never cou'd make use of any one thing.

'We go to-morrow to Caserta for ten days, as the Queen [h]as begd to see me. Sir William [h]as not yet seen their Magestys, since his illness. Theirfore to-morrow we dine at Actons, and go to Court in the evening, where Sir William will be receved with open arms by all. This air [h]as done him a great deal of good, and he is better then he [h]as been for some years. The Queen [h]as offered me to go to her Pallace at Castelmare, which I believe we shall [do] in the summer. In short, we are so happy, our situation is very flattering in the publick character, and in private we are models for all husbands and wives. This will give you pleasure, I am sure. Remember me to the Colonel, tho he never thinks of me. Is the Princess of Wales handsome? You are in the midst of

'Yours sincerely,

'EMMA HAMILTON.'

More than a month had now passed since Sir William Hamilton's last interview with either of their Majesties of Naples. But during this period, when from his absence at court he was supposed by ordinary observers to be without the advantages of confidential intercourse with Ferdinand and the Queen, he saw more of the working of Maria Caroline's mind than was revealed to Ministers, who seized every opportunity of approaching Her Majesty. The incessant correspondence she maintained with Lady Hamilton was the veil with which Maria Caroline hid the closeness of her diplomatic intercourse with the British Minister.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A TITLE TO GRATITUDE.

Lady Hamilton's Service touching the Spanish King's Letter—Nelson's Estimate of this Service—Words of the Codicil—Pettigrew's Account of the Service—Question of a Date—Were there Two Letters from Spain, or only One?—The Spanish-French Treaty—Embargo on Spanish Shipping in English Ports—Nelson's Capture of the *Santa Sabina*—Examination of Pettigrew's Statement—Absurdities of the Statement—Lady Hamilton's Private Purse—Extraordinary Payment out of it—Lady Hamilton's Letter to Mr. Charles Greville—Her View of her patriotic Services—Her Position at the Court of Naples.

1796 A.D.

IN the annals of Lady Hamilton, 1796 is memorable as the year in which she is said to have rendered Great Britain the earlier of the two services, for which Nelson deemed her entitled to pecuniary recompense as well as to the gratitude of her country. 'First,' Nelson wrote in the historic codicil, dated 21st of October, 1805, 'she obtained the King of Spain's letter, in 1796, to his brother, the King of Naples, acquainting him of his intention to declare war against England; from which letter the Ministry sent out orders to the then Sir John Jervis to strike a stroke, if opportunity offered, against either the arsenals of Spain or her fleets. That neither of these was done is not the fault of Lady Hamilton.' Words which of themselves

dispose of the baseless statement that the Battle of St. Vincent resulted from the orders then sent out to Sir John Jervis.

Speaking of Lady Hamilton's influence over the Queen of Naples, and of this particular service, Pettigrew (*vide*, 'Life of Nelson,' vol. ii, p. 610) says:

'By the cultivation of this influence, and untiring watchfulness to promote British interests, Lady Hamilton ascertained that a courier had brought to the King of Naples a private letter from the King of Spain, and such was her zeal for the interests of her country, and so great was her power with the Queen, that she absolutely prevailed upon Her Majesty to abstract this communication from the King's possession. Upon examination, it was found to contain the King of Spain's determination to withdraw from the coalition into which he had entered, and join the French against England. At this time, Sir William Hamilton was lying dangerously ill, and unable to attend to his duties; but Lady Hamilton prevailed on the Queen to permit her to take a copy of the letter, and she immediately dispatched it by a messenger to Lord Grenville, taking the then very necessary precaution to ensure its safe transit, to effect which cost her about £400, which she paid out of her own private purse.'

Respecting the particular month of the year in which Lady Hamilton rendered this service, Nelson is silent. Nor has the month ever been given by any writer. That Nelson was right as to the year can scarcely be questioned.

In the previous chapter of this work appears the letter (published by Pettigrew immediately after the above-printed passage of his book), from Maria Caroline to Lady Hamilton, that accompanied the secret letter in cypher from Spain. The date of that letter given in Pettigrew's book is 'April the 29th, 1795.' Is this the right date? Of all inaccuracies in letters

(especially in *printed* letters) none are more common than wrong dates. If the Queen, who wrote in great agitation ('My very dear Lady, My head is so confused, and my spirits so agitated, that I know not what to do.') wrote '1795' when she should have written '1796,' Her Majesty only made such a clerical slip as is often made by careful scribes when they are writing calmly. If the Queen wrote '1796,' and Pettigrew mistook the 6 for 5, he would not be seriously blameworthy, for Her Majesty's handwriting was always perplexingly illegible. If the '1795' is a misprint for '1796,' Pettigrew, in correcting his proof, merely overlooked one of the errors which compositors so often make, and the most careful and vigilant correctors of proofs so often overlook.

One of the reasons for suspecting this error of date is, that whilst it is difficult to conceive what news, likely to agitate her so greatly, can have come to Her Majesty from Spain in 1795, the news, which did certainly come to her from Spain in 1796, must have stirred her profoundly. Moreover, April the 29th is just about the time of 1796, which several circumstances would dispose a cautious historian to regard as the approximate time, when Maria Caroline received early and secret intelligence from the Spanish King's secret letter of his determination to go over to the French. The resolve of course preceded the negotiations for the treaty with France by some weeks, preceded the settlement of terms by some few months, and preceded the ratification of the compact by a somewhat longer term. In pre-railway and pre-telegraph days, diplomatic negotiations between

Paris and Madrid, even when pushed forward energetically, were affairs of slow progress. This particular Spanish-French treaty (*vide*, Plunkett's 'Last Naval War,' vol i, p. 132) was ratified in Paris on the 12th of September, 1796; the ratification being followed three days later by the British Government's order for the seizure of all Spanish ships in British ports. As Spain answered this embargo by a declaration of war, which was followed immediately by the sailing of Admiral Don Juan de Langara's fleet from Cadiz for the Straits, Spain and Great Britain were by the ears, months before the glorious Valentine's Day, that made Sir John Jervis an Earl, and gave Commodore Nelson the rank and style of Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson, K.C.B. One of Nelson's memorable achievements to the detriment of Spain was his gallant capture of the Spanish frigate, *Santa Sabina*, on the 19th of December, 1796. Though it preceded the Battle of St. Vincent by eight weeks and a day, this exploit was too long subsequent to the commencement of open hostilities between Great Britain and Spain, for Nelson to think of it for a single moment as a consequence of the secret orders, sent from London to Sir John Jervis. Following the ratification of the Spanish-French treaty by fourteen weeks, *La Minèrve's* victory over the *Santa Sabina* was of course an incident, referable to later orders than the instructions 'to strike a stroke, if opportunity offered,' alluded to in the famous codicil.

For the moment, let it be assumed that the Queen's letter touching the Spanish epistle in cypher was written exactly the year next after the date assigned

to the document in Pettigrew's book, and that the epistle in cypher was *the* momentous announcement of the Spanish King's purpose to join hands with the French. In that case the Queen's letter is in droll conflict with the statement, that Lady Hamilton 'absolutely prevailed upon Her Majesty to abstract this communication' (*i.e.*, the Spanish epistle in cypher) 'from the King's possession,' and yet further 'prevailed on the Queen to permit her to take a copy of the letter.'

But a biographer must work with materials offered to his hands, and is bound to accept the deliberate statements of credit-worthy and authorized historians, unless he can distinctly prove them to be in error. In the absence, therefore, of clear and conclusive evidence to the point, the present writer would not be justified in giving for historic fact, what is no more than his reasonable suspicion that the epistle in cypher, referred to in Maria Caroline's note, was the same epistle from the Spanish King, that is referred to in Nelson's codicil. An examination of the original document might, or might not, convert the reasonable suspicion to certainty. But, till further evidence shall convert the suspicion to sure knowledge, readers must assume, that Lady Hamilton had view of a momentous letter from Spain in April 1795, as well as the important letter of which she sent a copy to Lord Grenville in the following year.

For the present the letter she copied in 1796 must be regarded as the later of two remarkable letters from Spain. It does not, however, follow that the account given by successive writers of her way of

getting this later despatch and dealing with it should be accepted without suspicion. Since Maria Caroline is seen by her own letter to have been curiously prompt in showing of her own accord a letter in cypher from Spain to Lady Hamilton, it might be imagined she would show her favourite no less readily another letter from Spain, touching British interests in a remarkable manner. Yet Pettigrew's words imply that Lady Hamilton did not in 1796 get view of the King of Spain's letter without difficulty.

‘So great,’ says Dr. Pettigrew, ‘was her power with the Queen, that she absolutely prevailed upon Her Majesty to abstract this communication from the King's possession’: words certainly implying, at the least, that Lady Hamilton did not get view of the letter, without using entreaty and persuasion. If the Queen had only a year or so before of her own accord sent her by messenger a cyphered letter from Spain (and the Queen's own handwriting is in evidence that she did so send her favourite an especially important and secret epistle, addressed to the King), how was it that Lady Hamilton had to beg and persuade Her Majesty to show her another letter from Spain? As Maria Caroline had free access to her husband's cabinet, and every paper it contained, one is at a loss to see why it was needful for her *to abstract* this particular document from the King's possession, before she could show it to the irresistible petitioner.

Having gained view of the momentous writing, Lady Hamilton ‘prevailed on the Queen to permit her to take a copy of the letter.’ She could not get

leave to copy the letter without begging and persuading the Queen to let her do—what?—why, precisely what Her Majesty wished her to do. One could have believed Dr. Pettigrew, had he been content to say that, on hearing of a Spanish courier's arrival at the royal palace, Lady Hamilton hastened to the Queen, in order to get the news, and in full confidence of getting every scrap of the news, which in any way touched the interests of Great Britain; and that on seeing the letter, she copied it. But in asking his readers to believe, that it was a difficult business for Lady Hamilton to get a view of the writing which the Queen was of course eager to show her, and another difficult business for her to get leave to copy the document, whose contents Her Majesty wished to be passed on as quickly as possible to the British Cabinet, Dr. Pettigrew asks too much.

One must notice yet another droll point of this fanciful piece of personal history. Having made the copy for Lord Granville's eye, Lady Hamilton 'immediately dispatched it by a messenger to Lord Grenville, taking the then very necessary precautions to insure its safe transit, to effect which cost her about £400, which she paid out of her own private purse.' Why was it needful for her to pay this large sum out of her own pocket? The romantic narrative furnishes the answer to this question. 'At this time,' we are assured, 'Sir William Hamilton was lying dangerously ill, and unable to attend to his duties.' The minister being so ill, of course, his wife could not ask him for the money. So she paid it out of her private purse! This is amusing. Lady Hamilton's

private purse, even in this splendid passage of her story, never had more than £50 in it at a time, nor ever had so much in it except on quarter-days. The whole income of her private purse was £200 a-year, paid quarterly. Out of this income she allowed her grandmother Kidd £20 a-year, paid for her mother's clothes and washing, and provided her with pocket-money. After these deductions Lady Hamilton's clear income, for her own personal expenses, cannot well have exceeded £150 a-year, and in dealing with this modest revenue, she often had a difficulty in making the end of one quarter's income meet the beginning of the next quarter's allowance. Court lady though she was, she often had no more than two or three silver pieces in her pocket. She would not have so often asked Mr. Charles Greville to send her hats and gloves, and ribands, and muslin for a new gown from London, had she not been kept by Sir William rather closely and hardly to her allowance. In the last month of 1794, she wrote to Mr. Greville, 'For I have so many occasions to spend my money, that my two hundred pounds will scarcely do for me.' Yet Dr. Pettigrew would have us believe that, about a year and half later, she was in a position to take £400, at a single dip, out of her private purse. The story is absurd. But, as readers will soon see, it is not the absurdest of the wild stories told of what she did with the moneys of her private purse.

No doubt, Sir William Hamilton often made her presents of things, sometimes made her *handsome* presents of things, though not of money. She had of course kept her five-hundred-pounds-worth of

diamonds ; and it is conceivable that by this time she was mistress of jewels, that could have been sold for three or four times that sum. But it is not alleged that she sold or pawned her personal ornaments and other chattels for a sufficient sum to pay the special courier. The statement is that she paid a sum of about four hundred pounds out of her private purse, as though she were a lady with a handsome account at her banker's.

That Lady Hamilton in 1796 regarded herself, as rendering important services to her country, services that entitled her to the gratitude of the government and the whole nation, appears from the '*myself in particular*,' in the opening paragraph of the following letter :

*Lady Hamilton to the Hon. Charles Greville, King's
Mewes, London.*

'Naples ; Sep^{br}. 21st, 1796.

'We have not time to write to you, as we have been 3 days and nights, writing to send by this courier letters of *consequence* for our government. They ought to be gratefull to Sir William and *myself in particular*, as my situation at this Court is very *extraordinary*, and what no person [h]as as yet arrived at ; but one [h]as no thanks, and I am almost sick of grandeur.

'We are tired to death with anxiety, and God knows w[h]ere we shall soon be, and what will become of us, if things go on as they do now. Sir William is very well. I am not, but hope, when the cold weather comes on and we go to Caserta, I shall be better. Our house—breakfast, dinner and supper—is like a fair ; and what with attendance on my adorable Queen I have not one moment for writing, or anything comfortable. I however hope soon to get quiet, and then I will write to you fully. Pray, settle Hackwood's account. We desire it. And send me by the bearer a Dun-

stable hat, and some ribbands, or what you think will be acceptable. Pray do you never think on me. He is *our* Courier; so, pray, do not spare him. In haist,

‘Ever your sincere,

‘EMMA HAMILTON.

‘P.S.—I have now to-night an assembly of 3 hundred waiting.’

In one respect, Lady Hamilton took a just view of herself and her doings. Her position at the Court of Naples was ‘very *extraordinary*.’ She might have underscored the ‘very’ as well as the ‘extraordinary,’ without over-stating the strangeness of her position. And she had still to enter the strangest part of her Italian career. That strangest and closing part of the curious drama began some two years later, when she is said to have taken the King, Queen, and whole court in her hand and carried them off to Palermo. The Lady Hamilton who kept at Naples in 1796 and 1797 a house, that was ‘like a fair,’ was a staid, sober, homely, commonplace creature, in comparison with the Lady Hamilton of 1798 and 1799. The ‘assembly of three hundred waiting’ was a mere handful of pleasure-seekers, in comparison with the mob of magnificoes and merry folk she entertained on the 29th of September, 1798.

CHAPTER XIX.

NELSON AND THE NILE.

The Patroness of the British Navy—Her Abhorrence of the French—She chooses her Hero—Nelson's Services—His eight Months' Stay in England—He returns to the Mediterranean—He is appointed to the Command of a Squadron—His Orders and Instructions—Maria Caroline's Position—The French Party in Naples—Lady Hamilton's Appeal to Earl St. Vincent—The Earl's answer—The French Expedition from Toulon—It sails for Malta and Egypt—Nelson in Pursuit—His First Run to Egypt—He returns to Sicilian Waters—Troubridge at Naples—Dr. Pettigrew's strange Story—A Medley of Misconceptions—Lady Hamilton's Service to Nelson—The Service stript of romantic Exaggerations—Maria Caroline's Warrant to the Governor of Syracuse—Nelson's Gratitude—Water and Victuals for his Ships—He returns to Egypt.

1797—1798 A.D.

FROM the date of Nelson's coming to Naples in 1793 to his triumphal arrival at the same capital in 1798, Lady Hamilton's fervid thoughts played chiefly about three objects—her adorable Queen Maria Caroline, the glorious British Navy, and the detestable French Party—the Jacobins (as they were styled) of Naples—who were plotting and scheming for the destruction of her adorable Queen, the extirpation of the Bourbon monarchy, and the establishment of a republic, looking for its preservation to the accursed French Directory. Idolizing the British Navy,

the navy of dear Old England, her own navy (for had not Sir John Jervis again and again declared her its Patroness?), the vehemently emotional woman detested and loathed the French nation, as an unutterably wicked and cruel people. But stronger than her admiration of the British Navy, and deeper than her hatred of the French, was the love with which she regarded the Queen, who was her friend—yes, the friend of Emma Lyon, who had been nursery-maid for poor wages, and ‘kept girl’ for better wages. Detesting the French, because they were enemies of her country, she abhorred them far more passionately, as the satanic and blood-thirsty people, who longed to slay the adorable Queen of Naples, even as they had a few years since shed Marie Antoinette’s blood. Glorifying in the British Navy, because she was an Englishwoman, she valued it even more highly for being the only human power that could defeat ‘the accursed French Council’s’ designs on the Two Sicilies and their adorable Queen.

Proud of the sailors of ‘Old England,’ and hastening to do whatever Sir John Jervis or any of his officers required of her for the navy’s advantage, she served them with all the more alacrity, because Maria Caroline from motives of policy desired to stand well with the foreign fleet, and was ever delighted to show her good-will to the ships, that in fighting for the King of England fought also for the cause of the Queen of Naples.

It is in the nature of every woman, who honours a multitude of brave men, to select one of the whole number for particular admiration. For a few months

Lady Hamilton may have hesitated in her choice of a supreme hero, but Nelson's achievements did not permit her to waver long. How could the emotional woman do otherwise than select for her especial and most enthusiastic idolatry the sailor, who of all the officers of the mighty fleet was the most fortunate in opportunities for distinguishing himself, whilst his martial genius and dashing intrepidity caused him to make the most of each of them. When Nelson went to England towards the close of August 1797, for brief rest and better surgical treatment of his maimed arm, it was on the record of his doings during the war, that he had been in four actions with fleets of the enemy, three actions with frigates, six engagements against batteries, and ten actions in boats employed in cutting out of harbours, in destroying vessels, and in taking three towns. 'He had also,' says Pettigrew, 'served on shore with the army four months, and commanded the batteries at the sieges of Bastia and Calvi.' No other sailor's name shone forth so often and brilliantly in the budgets of naval news that came to the British Embassy at Naples. His achievements also were especially animating to the heart and fancy of the woman who read of them at a distance, because the doer was so dramatically conspicuous in the doings. It was not only that his ship was always at the point of hottest danger, sometimes fighting at the same moment right and left between two adversaries of greater bulk and more guns, but that the ship's captain was so often personally conspicuous in the narrative of the ship's success. The man resembled his ship in being ever to the fore. No

wonder that Lady Hamilton selected, for her own peculiar hero of the whole fleet, the man who was so incessantly offering himself to her admiration.

Something more than five months after the glorious Valentine's Day of 1797, Nelson returned to England for surgical treatment. Arriving at Spithead on the 1st of September, 1797, Nelson sailed on the 1st of the following April from Portsmouth for Lord St. Vincent's fleet off Cadiz: his stay in England being covered by seven calendar months. Short as his stay in England was, he returned to the Earl's fleet none too soon, for the French had been for months bringing together, building and preparing a large naval armament at Genoa and Toulon; and of all living admirals Nelson was the man best qualified to watch Toulon, to get more precise information of what was being done there, and to track and destroy the hostile fleet when it should have put out to sea.

Provided for this important service with a squadron that proved gloriously sufficient for the task, though under any other admiral's handling it would have proved miserably inadequate, Nelson entered with his usual alacrity and enthusiasm on the execution of his orders, which touched Lady Hamilton's personal story in so remarkable a manner, that it will be well for readers of this work to consider certain passages of them.

Dating from 'On board the *Ville de Paris* off Cadiz, May 21, 1798,' Lord St. Vincent wrote to 'Sir Horatio Nelson, K.B., Rear Admiral of the Blue,' under the bracketed heading '*Most Secret,*'

'In pursuance of orders from the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, to employ a squadron of His Majesty's ships

in the Mediterranean, under the command of a discreet officer (copies of which are enclosed, and other papers necessary for your guidance), and in conformity thereto, I do hereby authorize and require you, on being joined by the ships named in the margin, to take them and their captains under your command, in addition to those already with you: and to proceed with them in quest of the armament preparing at Toulon and Genoa, the object whereof appears to be, either an attack upon Naples, or Sicily; the conveyance of an army to some part of the coast of Spain, for the purpose of marching towards Portugal; or to pass through the Straits, with a view of proceeding to Ireland. On falling in with the said armament, or any part thereof, you are to use your utmost endeavours to *take, sink, burn, and destroy it . . .* . . . On the subject of supplies, I enclose also a copy of their Lordships' letter to me, and do require you strictly to comply with the spirit of it; by considering and treating as hostile any ports within the Mediterranean (those of Sardinia excepted), when provisions, or other articles you may be in want of, and which they may be enabled, to furnish, shall be refused—and you are to treat in like manner, and capture the ships and vessels of powers, or states, adhering to His Majesty's enemies.'

It should be especially observed that in these orders Nelson was instructed to consider and treat as hostile any ports within the Mediterranean (those of Sardinia excepted) that should refuse to give him provisions or other needful articles.

On this important point, Nelson was also ordered by Lord St. Vincent's 'Additional Instructions' of the same day in these words:

'From the tenor of the instructions from the Lord Commissioners of the Admiralty, which you will receive herewith, it appears their Lordships expect a favourable neutrality from Tuscany and the Two Sicilies; in any event you are to extract supplies, of whatever you may be in want of, from the territories of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the

King of the Two Sicilies, the Ottoman territory, Malta, and the ci-devant Venetian dominions, now belonging to the Emperor of Germany.'

Thus, besides being fully empowered, Nelson was expressly ordered to get whatever provisions he should require from the territories of Ferdinand of the Two Sicilies,—to get them, of course, by fair and courteous words, if civil speech were sufficient for the purpose, but to *take them by force*, should force be needful to 'extract supplies' from the power to whose 'friendly neutrality' Great Britain was entitled. This is a matter to be borne in mind by the readers of Lady Hamilton's story.

When Nelson received these orders, together with the command of the squadron that so soon covered Great Britain with glory, Maria Caroline's position had for years been growing more dangerous, and more and more alarming. In constant fear of invasion by France, she was at the same time menaced by internal revolution. For months past, when she and Lady Hamilton had talked together of the French activity at Toulon and Genoa, they spoke of preparations which they both regarded as preparations for an expedition against the Sicilies. It would have been strange had Maria Caroline thought otherwise, when Lord St. Vincent himself 'deemed it more probable that the French were set on the conquest of Sicily than on a movement against Portugal or an expedition to Ireland.' Maria Caroline's view of the French preparations was the view taken by her husband's subjects; and she knew that, though the Lazzaroni and the lower classes of the capital

were on her side, two-thirds of the nobility and other superior families of Naples were so infected with republican sentiment, that even those of the two-thirds who had not yet, openly or secretly, joined the French party, were so favourably disposed to France, and desirous of a new order of things, as to be ripe for rebellion the moment they should feel that rebellion would be successful. With her capital a hot-bed and school of revolution, and Toulon (as it seemed) preparing to launch an expedition against Naples, Maria Caroline conceived herself to stand literally, no less than figuratively, between the devil and the deep sea,—the same devil who, a few years since, had murdered her sister Marie Antoinette, and the deep sea, that would soon be alive with a French armament.

Loathing and dreading the French, Maria Caroline was compelled for the moment to feign acquiescence in the treaty which her husband, acting in submission to the Council of which *she* was a member, had recently made with the French Directory, whose Minister at Naples (Garat) was busily and successfully educating the Neapolitan nobility in republican principles and sentiment. It was at the instance of this diplomatist (this ‘regicide Minister’ and ‘most impudent, insolent dog,’ as Lady Hamilton styled him in one of her earliest letters to Nelson) that, in the season of his rapidly-growing power, a number of persons who, four years since had been convicted of political offences against Ferdinand’s government, were liberated from prison, and declared innocent victims of injustice. ‘The Jacobins,’ Lady

Hamilton wrote to Nelson, 'have all been lately declared innocent, after suffering four years' imprisonment, and I know they all deserved to be hanged long ago; and since Garrat has been here, and through his insolent letters to Gallo, these pretty gentlemen, that had planned the death of their Majesties, are to be let out on society again.' Of course, Lady Hamilton's view of these Jacobins and their doings came to her wholly from the Queen whom she adored, and the British Minister, who was his wife's instructor in politics and Maria Caroline's vehement partisan.

The treaty between Naples and France, to which reference has been made, contained a clause, that was directly aimed at the naval supremacy of the power to which Maria Caroline had long been looking for preservation. By this clause it was provided (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' vol. ii, p. 612) *that no more than two English ships-of-war should enter into any of the Neapolitan or Sicilian ports.* It is needless to say, that the Queen of Naples never had any purpose of respecting this clause, and was ready to regard the whole treaty as waste paper wherever and whenever its language should appear irreconcilable with her own policy. Maria Caroline was not the woman to regard treaties with superstitious reverence.

In the spring of 1798, when the French party at Naples was daily growing stronger and more insolent, Lady Hamilton—plying her pen with the Queen's cognizance, and at the Queen's *instigation* (as the able 'Temple Bar' essayist rightly says)—wrote,

on the 15th of April, to Earl St. Vincent, giving him a stirring account of the perils and humiliations of the Queen's position, and imploring him to take prompt measures for the protection of so virtuous a Princess. In his characteristic reply to this appeal, the Admiral-in-Chief of the British Fleet wrote from before Cadiz, on the 22nd of May (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' vol. i, p. 117), to the Patroness of the Navy :

'The picture you have drawn of the lovely Queen of Naples and the Royal Family would rouse the indignation of the most unfeeling of the creation at the infernal design of those devils who, for the scourge of the human race, govern France. I am bound by my oath of chivalry to protect all who are persecuted and distressed, and I would fly to the succour of their Sicilian Majesties, was I not positively forbid to quit my post before Cadiz. I am happy, however, to have a knight of superior prowess in my train, who is charged with this enterprise, at the head of as gallant a band as ever drew sword or trailed pike.'

On the day next following the day on which he dated the 'Instructions' to Nelson, Lord St. Vincent wrote thus expressly to the Patroness of the Navy, that Nelson's mission was to preserve the Queen of Naples. On the very same day, in reply to a petition from Sir William Hamilton, that was in harmony with Lady Hamilton's prayer for the Queen's benefit, Lord St. Vincent wrote (*vide* Pettigrew's 'Life of Nelson,' vol. i, p. 118) to the same effect, though in a somewhat different strain :

'I must decline entering into the wretched policy which has placed the Two Sicilies in the situation they now are, with respect to the system of the insolvent and overbearing Republic. I have a powerful squadron ready to go to the

assistance of Naples the moment I receive a reinforcement from the West of Ireland, which is on its passage hither, and I hourly look for its appearance with the utmost degree of anxiety and impatience. Rear-Admiral Sir Horatio Nelson will command this force, which is composed of the *élite* of the navy of England.'

Thus, on the 22nd of May, 1798, the Admiral-in-Chief of the British fleet, in answer to two several appeals which he rightly regarded as appeals from Maria Caroline herself, wrote to Sir William and Lady Hamilton that Her Majesty of Naples might be of good cheer, as that 'knight of superior prowess,' Sir Horatio Nelson, had been appointed to defeat Her Majesty's enemies and provide for her safety. In thus writing to the Minister and his wife Lord St. Vincent wrote, in fact, to the Queen, who of course saw his letters almost as soon as they came to Naples.

That Nelson, for some three weeks after the date of his 'Instructions,' regarded the French as set on an expedition against Naples or Sicily is certain. On the 17th of May he was off Cape Sicie, whence he wrote (under date, May 18th) to Earl St. Vincent that the *Terpsichore* had that morning captured a French corvette which had come out of Toulon on the previous night, from whose crew he had learnt that Buonaparte was at Toulon, where troops were embarking, and that troops were coming in frequent batches to Toulon from Marseilles, but had discovered nothing as to the destination of the armament. On the night of Sunday, (the 20th to 21st of May), his fleet was dispersed and his ship dismasted by the fearful three-days' storm off Sardinia, which, with characteristic

simplicity and devoutness, he 'believed firmly' to have been sent by 'the Almighty's goodness, to check his consummate vanity,'—the same 21st of May being the day on which the French fleet, under Buonaparte, began to come out of Toulon. Losing six days, through the storm and the injuries it did his vessel, Nelson put to sea again on the 27th of May. Sixteen days later (12th June, 1798), he was off Elba, writing to Sir William Hamilton: 'I hope we are in good time to save Naples or Sicily from falling into the hands of the enemy. I beg you will assure the King and Queen of Naples that I will not lose one moment in fighting the French fleet, and that no person can have a more ardent desire of saving them and of fulfilling the orders of the good and great King, our Master.' Up to the 12th of June, it is therefore manifest that he regarded himself as moving towards Naples to rescue their Sicilian Majesties from the grip of France. A day or so later, however, he had obtained from a Tunisian cruiser news that afforded him a different notion of Buonaparte's designs. The cruiser had, on the 4th instant, sighted the French armament off Trapani, in Sicily, steering eastward. 'If they pass Sicily,' he wrote to Earl Spencer, on the 15th of June, off the island of Ponza, 'I shall believe they are going on their scheme of possessing Alexandria, and getting troops to India—a plan concerted by Tippoo Saib, by no means so difficult as might at first view be imagined.'

On receiving off Capri, in the Bay of Naples, through Captain Troubridge (whom he had dispatched to Naples for conference with Sir William Hamilton and

Sir John Acton), sure intelligence that the French were off Malta and about to attack it on the 8th of June, and that the King of Naples, being at peace with France, could not assist him with ships, but, giving him good wishes, would afford him (under the rose) the use of the Sicilian ports, Nelson lost no time in sailing for Malta. Leaving the waters off Capri on the 17th of June, he dated on the morrow from ‘*Vanguard*, at sea,’ the well-known letter to Sir William Hamilton, ending, ‘Pray present my best respects to Lady Hamilton; tell her I hope to be presented to her crowned with laurel or cypress. But God is good, and to him do I commit myself and our cause.’

Whilst Nelson was looking for the French fleet, Maria Caroline and Lady Hamilton were in daily intercourse. It can be imagined how the Queen (who, though her heart was wholly with the English Admiral, could at present only help him ‘under the rose’) and the British Minister’s wife spoke with one another in their frequent conferences—wondering what evil business Buonaparte was after, weeping together in anticipation of the ills that would ensue if misadventure befel *their* admiral, comforting one another with averments that *their* admiral, their own Nelson, the Nelson who had declared so stoutly his purpose of saving the Sicilies, was not a man to be beaten, even by Fate. Whatever news of the two fleets came to the British Embassy, Lady Hamilton carried quickly to the Queen, who was no less prompt in sending her friend whatever intelligence of either

armament was brought to the Royal Palace. On learning (29th June, 1798) that Buonaparte sailed from Malta on the 19th inst. for the Levant, leaving six or eight thousand men to garrison the island, and that Nelson's squadron passed Syracuse at six or seven o'clock, a.m., of the 21st, and was afterwards sighted off Cape Passero, Maria Caroline dispatched the news instantly to her dear Lady Hamilton in a note that concluded with a message of compliments to Lady Hamilton's 'dear husband, the brave Chevalier.'

In the middle of July, Nelson returned to Sicilian waters. He had scoured the Mediterranean, and swept the Levant, in vain. He had visited Malta, sailed to Alexandria, touched the fringe of Syria, without coming on the fleet he yearned to take, sink, burn, and destroy. Everyone knows the story. As he lay at anchor off Syracuse (*vide* Clarke and McArthur, vol. i, p. 71), on the 20th of July, he wrote to his wife in England: 'I have not been able to find the French fleet, to my great mortification, or the event I can scarcely doubt. We have been off Malta, to Alexandria, in Egypt, Syria, into Asia, and are returned here without success; however, no person will say that it has been for want of activity. I yet live in hopes of meeting these fellows; but it would have been my delight to have tried Buonaparte on a wind, for he commands the fleet as well as the army.'

But before he could renew his search for the French fleet, it was needful for him to get a supply of fresh water. Other supplies were needed by his fleet,

though not urgently; but the need of water was too urgent for him to think of returning to Egypt, till the want was supplied. Remaining with his squadron off Syracuse, he dispatched an envoy to Naples to obtain permission for his ships to water at Syracuse, and take in such other supplies as the place should afford. In the previous month, as he was sailing from Civita Vecchia down to the Bay of Naples, he had sent Captain Troubridge to Naples, and now the same officer seems to have been selected for the accomplishment of this second mission to Sir William Hamilton. A more fit and natural choice Nelson could not have made. No officer in all his squadron was more completely than Troubridge in the Admiral's confidence. Nelson's close friend, Troubridge had been a few weeks earlier in confidential intercourse with Sir William Hamilton, and had on that occasion shown himself well qualified to confer with the Minister. Moreover, it is only by accepting the not conclusive evidence, that Troubridge was thus sent again to Naples, that one gets a view through the perplexities of the evidence respecting Nelson's correspondence with Sir William and Lady Hamilton in June and July, 1798.*

* I speak thus cautiously and doubtfully, because of all the numerous matters touching Lady Hamilton's intercourse with Nelson, that afford questions of controversy, none is fuller of doubtful points and erroneous dates, than the generally accepted story of the service she rendered him in respect to the supplies to his squadron, up to the time of his second departure from Sicilian waters to Egypt. Pettigrew, who has hitherto been our chief source of information respecting Lady Hamilton, is no safe guide on the business. Indeed, his egregious misstatements are a chief cause of the manifold perplexities. To show how he contributes to the confusion, that without his interference was sufficiently per-

The envoy, thus sent to Naples by the Admiral, came to the British Embassy one morning about six o'clock, a.m., and, after rousing the porter, begged that his arrival should be forthwith announced to Sir William Hamilton. The envoy had no reason to complain of the reception accorded to him at so unusual an hour. Rising quickly from his bed, Sir

plexing, it is enough to give this single sentence from his book : 'In June, 1798, about three days after the French fleet had passed for Malta, Sir William and Lady Hamilton were one morning awakened, about six o'clock, by the arrival of Captain Troubridge with a letter from Sir Horatio Nelson, then with the fleet lying off the Bay near to Capri, requesting that the ambassador would procure him permission to enter with his fleet to Naples, or any of the Sicilian ports, to provision, water, &c., as otherwise he must run for Gibraltar, being in urgent want, and that, consequently, he would be obliged to give over all further pursuit of the French Fleet, *which he had missed at Egypt on account of their having put into Malta!*' It is obvious that 'June' at the beginning of this sentence is no mere clerical slip or misprint for 'July,' because the ensuing words 'about three days after the French fleet had passed for Malta,' show that the writer meant June, in the beginning of which month the French fleet did pass on their way to Malta. Consequently here is an authoritative historian, assuring his readers that Nelson (who did not get out of the Bay of Naples till the 17th of June, on his first run to Egypt, and did not return to Sicilian waters from the devious trip till the middle of July) had followed the French fleet and missed it at Egypt, and returned from the bootless search, about three days after the French fleet had passed the Sicilies on the voyage to Malta,—in fact, that Nelson had accomplished and returned from his first voyage from Sicilian waters, several days before he began it. The rest of the long paragraph, of which this marvellous passage is the opening sentence, bristles with blunders, great or small; and yet, because it was a piece of sketchy and romantic narrative, this unfortunate paragraph, of a generally sound though here and there egregiously inaccurate book, was selected by half-a-dozen reviewers for especial commendation, and given at length as an example of the author's entertaining and reliable intelligence. The reasonable explanation of the initial blunder of the wildly absurd paragraph is that Dr. Pettigrew mistook two several accounts of two successive missions sent by Nelson to Naples, for two narratives of the same

William Hamilton was with his visitor in a few minutes, and on hearing the object of his visit went off at once to 'Sir John Acton, who immediately convened a Council at which the King was present. This was about half-past six.' Whether 6.30 was the time at which Sir William Hamilton roused the Prime Minister, or the time at which the latter sent out the summonses for the Council, or the time for which the Council was convened, does not appear from Dr. Pettigrew's curious narrative. If the Council was brought together within half-an-hour of the envoy's arrival at the British Embassy, the celerity was marvellous. Anyhow, according to Pettigrew, the Queen, who forebore to attend the Council, was still in bed whilst the King and his ministers were in consultation.

'Lady Hamilton went immediately to the Queen,' runs the strange story, 'who received her in her bed-room. She represented to Her Majesty that the safety of the Two Sicilies now depended upon her conduct, and that should the Council, as she feared under any circumstances they must do, decide on negative or half measures, the Sicilies must be lost, if Nelson were not supplied agreeably to his request,

affair, and in consequence of the mistake worked up the memoranda (given him for biographical purposes) of Troubridge's errand to Naples in June, with memoranda of a second mission on which the same (or some other) officer was sent from Nelson to Sir William Hamilton a month later. This hypothetical view of the business will also account for the inaccuracies and irreconcilable discrepancies of other passages by the author, who repeatedly and in various ways represents that the second of the 'eminent services of Emma Hamilton,' for which Nelson wished the nation to reward her, was certainly and indisputably an incident of the middle of June, and no less certainly and indisputably an incident of the middle of July, whereas the prayer which Lady Hamilton made *on her knees* to Maria Caroline, if made at all, must have been made in *one*, and not in both, of the two months.

by which he would be enabled to follow the great French force which had passed in that direction only a few days before.'

As she must have known the Queen had herself been summoned to the Council, of which she was a member, how strange of Lady Hamilton to trouble herself to explain the position! Knowing well how sensible Maria Caroline was that the safety of her husband's throne depended on the success of British arms in the Mediterranean, why did Lady Hamilton deem it necessary to impress on the resolute and sagacious Queen, that her cause would suffer if Nelson were worsted? As, according to the first sentence of Dr. Pettigrew's own story, Nelson had already spent a month in vainly trying to come upon the French fleet at Egypt and elsewhere, how came Lady Hamilton to represent that the Toulon armament had passed the Sicilies, 'only a few days before'? But the story becomes even more absurd as it proceeds.

'Nothing could exceed the alarm with which the Queen received this intelligence; she urged that the King was in Council, and would decide with his Ministers. Lady Hamilton prayed and implored on her knees to authorize the required assistance; the Queen was unable to withstand her entreaties and her arguments; pen, ink, and paper were brought to her, Lady Hamilton dictated, and the Queen wrote a positive order, "directed to all Governors of the Two Sicilies, to receive with hospitality the British fleet to water, victual, and aid them." In every way this order, as Lady Hamilton well knew, would be more respected than that which might emanate from the King.'

The intrepid, self-dependent, resolute Maria Caroline was not a woman given to seizures of alarm.

No woman ever had a better command of her feelings. What was there to alarm such a woman in the announcement that the British Admiral, whom she had for weeks been determined to help to the utmost of her power, wanted fresh water for his ships? Is it likely that the Queen, who was capable of revealing her husband's secret correspondence to Sir William Hamilton, and was in the habit of acting on the most important matters without consulting him, insisted that the decision of a question, touching her own especial policy so directly and deeply, should be left to her husband and his ministers? What need can there have been for Lady Hamilton to 'pray and implore on her knees' that the self-willed Queen should do what she had for weeks made up her mind to do, as soon as she should be asked to do it? To believe that she could not resist Lady Hamilton's entreaties and arguments, though they were unacceptable to her, is to believe that the imperious Queen was the mere instrument of her own mere creature. Is it conceivable that Lady Hamilton—who honoured the Queen as a greatly good and wise woman, and at all times had the good sense to show the Queen due respect and never to presume on her royal favour—ventured to dictate the terms of the Queen's warrant? To remember the literary style of Lady Hamilton's epistles, and to imagine her dictating to the Queen the words of a royal warrant, is to be convulsed with merriment.

Pettigrew's narrative of this business is a tissue of absurd extravagances. Yet it is in substance just such a wild story as might have proceeded from Lady

Hamilton in her later time, when she had talked herself into believing all sorts of romantic fancies about her services to England and her former authority over the Queen of the Sicilies.

A credible story of the court-lady's interview with her royal mistress would be that, on entering the Queen's bed-room, she was received by Maria Caroline with these words,—‘Of course our brave Nelson will have whatever he requires of the Governor of Syracuse, whatever the Council may decide. Give me pen and paper, and I will write an order for you to send to him. At present I can only help my dear defender “under the rose,” but as soon as he has destroyed the French fleet I will help him openly, and pack Mons^r. Garat off to Paris.’

If the warrant was signed and given, as Pettigrew alleges, Lady Hamilton, ‘got it’ from the Queen, *because* the Queen of her own accord gave it to her. If the letter was so given, one can readily believe Nelson fared all the better for it at Syracuse. Empowered by his instructions to take by force whatever he wanted from the Sicilian ports, Nelson could of course have obtained supplies at Syracuse, without the Queen's letter, in spite of the Council's refusal; but it was every way better for him to get the supplies by means of the Queen's secret mandate.

On receiving the Queen's letter, Nelson (according to Pettigrew's narrative) declared his gratitude for it in the following brief and wildly misdated letter to Lady Hamilton—letter given by Pettigrew in facsimile,—

‘MY DEAR LADY HAMILTON,—I have kissed the Queen’s letter. Pray say, I hope for the honour of kissing her hand, when no fears will intervene. Assure her Majesty that no person has her felicity more at heart than myself, and that the sufferings of her family will be a Tower of Strength on the day of Battle. Fear not the event. God is with us. God bless you and Sir William. Pray say I cannot stay to answer his letter.

‘Ever yours faithfully,

‘HORATIO NELSON.’

Nelson was sometimes curiously wrong in dating his letters. But I am not aware that he was ever guilty of a wilder misdate than the erroneous date of this brief note, which bears numerous signs of the hot haste in which it was written. If Pettigrew’s fac-simile may be trusted, Nelson dated it, ‘17th May, 6 p.m.’ Wrong as to the *month*, the date may also be wrong as to the number of the day. Simply because Nelson was off Capri, and Troubridge came to him off Capri from Naples on the 17th of June, Pettigrew assumed that May was a clerical slip for ‘June.’ But for every consideration favouring this assumption, a dozen stronger considerations point to ‘July’ as the month in which the note was written.

That Lady Hamilton, to whom the letter was addressed, regarded it as having been written in July, appears from this endorsement, which she put on the letter with her own hand,—‘This letter I received after I had sent the Queen[’s] letter for receiving our ships into their ports,—for the Queen had decided to act in [op]position to the King who would not break with France, and our fleet must have gone

down to Gibraltar to have watered, and the battle of the Nile would not have been fought, for the French fleet would have got back to Toulon.' Had Nelson's request for leave to water his ships, and the Queen's letter been incidents of June, prior to his first voyage to Egypt, the letter, instead of being serviceable to him, would by expediting his movements have rendered him disservice. For he missed the French on his first trip to Alexandria, through getting to the Egyptian port and passing from it two days before the arrival of the French fleet. Had he been compelled to sail to Gibraltar for water in June,—had the difficulty of getting water delayed him for weeks in June, as it delayed him for a few days in July,—he would have come upon the enemy at his first coming to Aboukir Bay. Knowing this, Lady Hamilton would not have prided herself so much on sending him Maria Caroline's warrant, had it been dated in June instead of July.

That Nelson himself regarded the Queen's letter as having enabled him to victual and water so expeditiously at Syracuse, appears from the memorable Codicil. On the strength, however, of certain passages of some of the Admiral's epistles, Sir N. H. Nicolas questioned whether Nelson had any knowledge of the letter, said to have been written by the Queen for his advantage. And in this view of a perplexing matter, Sir N. Harris Nicolas is followed by Mr. John Knox Laughton in the 'Introduction' to his able abridgment of Nelson's 'Letters and Despatches.' Speaking of Lady Hamilton's part in the affair, Mr. Laugh-

ton observes, 'That she afterwards taught Nelson to believe in her action we know from the solemn expression of his last wishes, but the reality of it seems very doubtful.'

In a letter, dated 20th of July 1798, Nelson wrote from Syracuse to Earl St. Vincent, 'We are watering, and getting such refreshments as the place affords, and shall get to sea by the 25th.' Under date of 22nd July, 1798, Nelson either wrote, or is represented to have written, to Sir William and Lady Hamilton: 'My dear Friends, Thanks to your exertions we have victualled and watered, and surely watering at the Fountain of Arethusa, we must have victory. We shall sail with the first breeze, and be assured I shall return either crowned with laurel or covered with cypress.'* On the 21st October 1805, he wrote

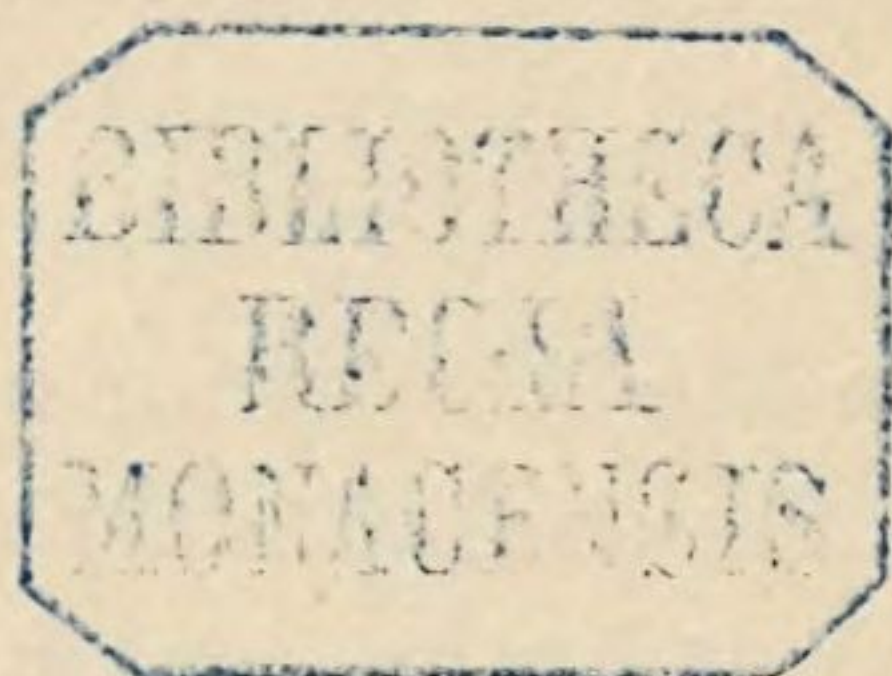
* On grounds, which seem to me scarcely sufficient for so strong a judgment, Mr. Laughton declares this letter 'a palpable forgery.' Though I am doubtful of the genuineness of the composition, I hesitate to reject it as a fabrication, merely because the reference to the fountain of Arethusa is not in Nelson's usual style, and because the words, 'Thanks to your exertions, we have victualled and watered,' are not in perfect harmony with the words of another note, written under the same date by Nelson, when he was fuming 'about the King of Naples' orders only to admit three or four of the ships of our fleet into his ports.' The phrase about Arethusa's fountain may have been taken from one of Sir William Hamilton's letters, and the discord of the two epistles is something much less rigid than 'a flat contradiction.' As he admits the genuineness of the epistle, in which on the very next day (23rd July) Nelson wrote from Syracuse to Sir William Hamilton of 'this delightful harbour, where our present wants have been most amply supplied, and where every attention has been paid us,' the able editor of an excellent book must concede that the genuine letter of July 23rd accords with the 'palpable forgery,' and that within a few hours of writing the petulant note of July 22nd, Nelson had reason to write, and *did* write, thankfully to the friends who had done their best to help him.

in the famous Codicil, ‘Secondly, the British fleet, under my command, could never have returned the second time to Egypt, had not Lady Hamilton’s influence with the Queen of Naples caused letters to be wrote to the Governor of Syracuse, that he was to encourage the fleet being supplied with every thing, should they put into any port in Sicily. We put into Syracuse and received every supply, went to Egypt and destroyed the French fleet.’

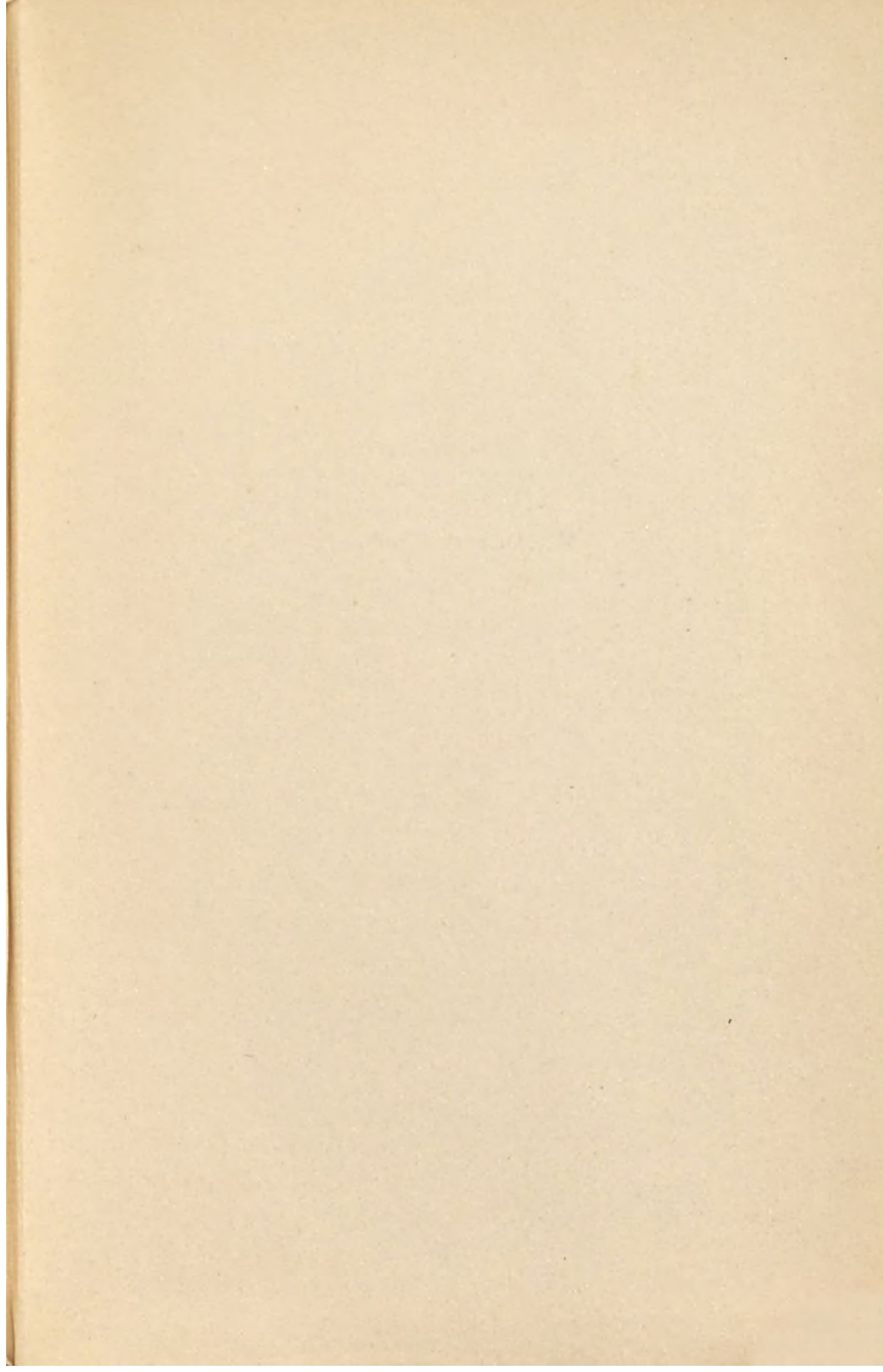
Touching this letter to the Governor of Syracuse, Lady Hamilton wrote in Nelson’s Letter Book, ‘The Queen’s letter, privately got by me, got him his fleet victualled and watered in a few days.—Emma Hamilton.’ And taken in one sense, these words may be a fair description of a service she rendered Nelson. But it does not follow that the letter she received was extorted from the Queen’s fears by argument, persuasion, entreaty. That misrepresentation must be put aside with a smile. The letter (if given at all) was freely given by the Queen, who wrote it in her own interest, *not* from love of Lady Hamilton. In this matter, as in other matters, Lady Hamilton was only an instrument which Maria Caroline used for her own ends.

Nor does it follow, because the letter may have enabled him to get the water and victuals in the readiest and most agreeable way, that without it Nelson would have been compelled to go to Gibraltar, and would not have come upon the French in the Bay of Aboukir. In his fleet he had the means of taking by force in Sicily what he needed; and he had been

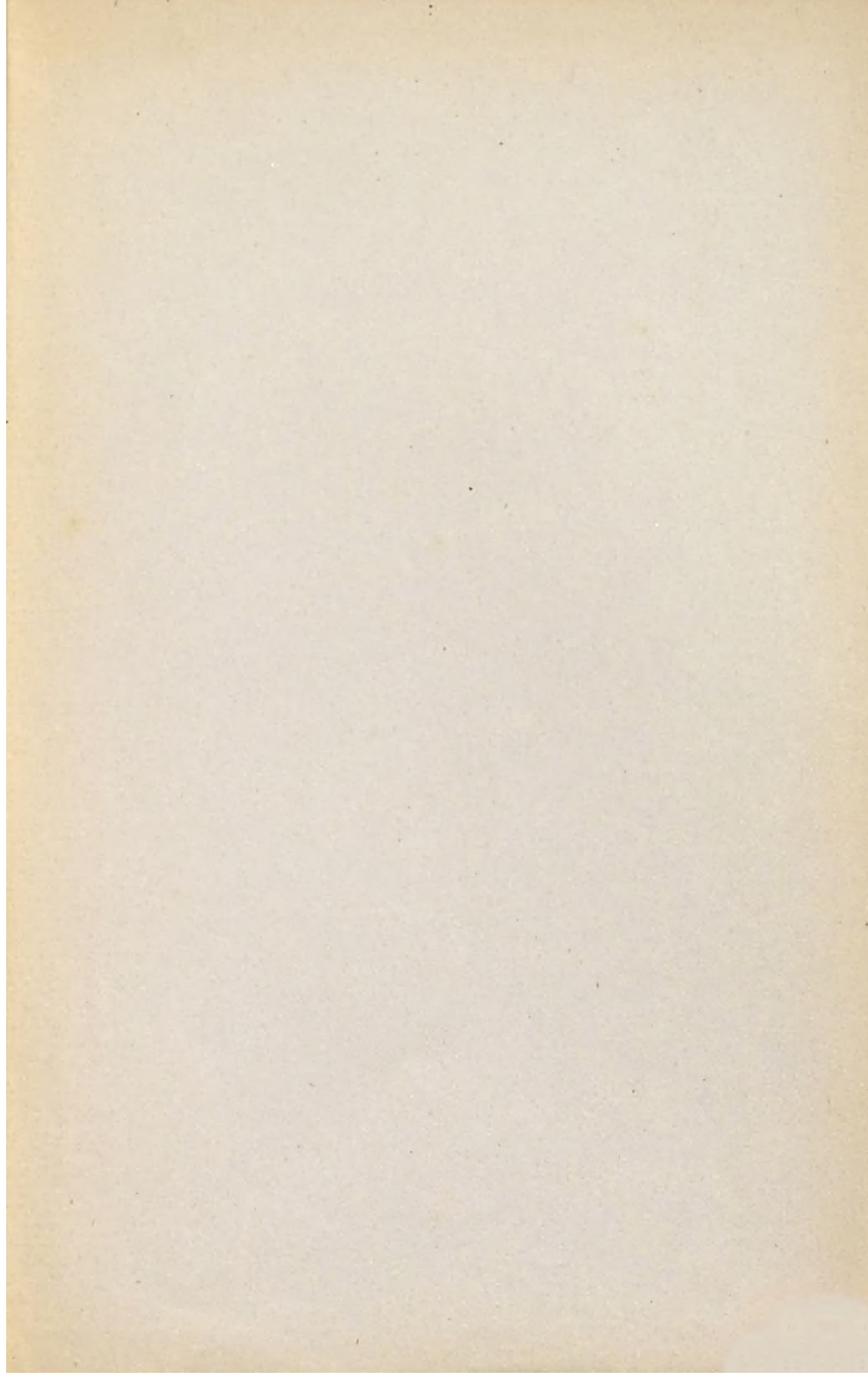
empowered to use force for that end. At first, it was, of course, incumbent on him to ask leave, but it can be scarcely questioned that in default of the permission, he would have acted on his instructions, and *taken leave* to water and victual at Syracuse.



END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.



102





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